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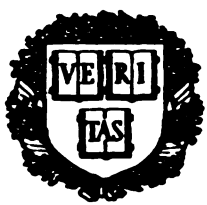

FROM THE BEQUEST OF

Mary Osgood

OF MEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

Frontispiece.

SIRIMBA PLAYERS, CONGO.

WEST AFRICAN STUDIES

BY

MARY H. KINGSLEY

AUTHOR OF "TRAVELS IN WEST AFRICA"

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

London

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Mary Osgood [illegible]

RICHARD CLAY AND SONS, LIMITED,
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TO MY BROTHER

MR. C. G. KINGSLEY

AND TO MY FRIEND WHO IS DEAD

THIS BOOK IS

Dedicated

PREFACE TO THE READER

I PRAY you who may come across this book to distinguish carefully between the part of it written by others and that written by me.

Anything concerning West Africa written by M. le Comte C. de Cardi or Mr. John Harford, of Bristol, does not require apology and explanation; while anything written by me on this, or any subject, does. M. le Comte de Cardi possesses an unrivalled knowledge of the natives of the Niger Delta, gained, as all West Coasters know, by personal experience, and gained in a way whereby he had to test the truth of his ideas about these natives, not against things said concerning them in books, but against the facts themselves, for years; and depending on the accuracy of his knowledge was not a theory, but his own life and property. I have always wished that men having this kind of first-hand, well-tested knowledge regarding West Africa could be induced to publish it for the benefit of students, and for the foundation of a true knowledge concerning the natives of West Africa in the minds of the general public, feeling assured that if we had this class of knowledge available, the student of ethnology would be saved from many fantastic theories, and the general public enabled to

bring its influence to bear in the cause of justice, instead of in the cause of fads. I need say nothing more regarding Appendix I.; it is a mine of knowledge concerning a highly developed set of natives of the true Negro stem, particularly valuable because, during recent years, we have been singularly badly off for information on the true Negro. It would not be too much to say that, with the exception of the important series of works by the late Sir A. B. Ellis, and a few others, so few that you can count them on the fingers of one hand, and Dr. Freeman's *Ashanti and Jaman*, published this year, we have practically had no reliable information on these, the most important of the races of Africa, since the eighteenth century. The general public have been dependent on the work of great East and Central African geographical explorers, like Dr. Livingstone, Mr. H. M. Stanley, Dr. Gregory, Mr. Scott Elliott, and Sir H. H. Johnston, men whose work we cannot value too highly, and whom we cannot sufficiently admire; but who, nevertheless, were not when describing Africans describing Negroes, but that great mixture of races existing in Central and East Africa whose main ingredient is Bantu. To argue from what you know about Bantus when you are dealing with Negroes is about as safe and sound as to argue from what you may know about Eastern Europeans when you are dealing with Western Europeans. Nevertheless, this fallacious method has been followed in the domain of ethnology and politics with, as might be expected, bad results. I am, therefore, very proud at being permitted by M. le Comte de Cardi to publish his statements on true Negroes; and I need not say I have in no way altered them, and that he is in no way responsible for any errors that there may be in the portions of this book written by me.

Mr. John Harford, the man who first[1] opened up that still little-known Qua Ibo river, another region of Negroes, also requires no apology. I am confident that the quite unconscious picture of a West Coast trader's life given by him in Appendix II. will do much to remove the fantastic notions held concerning West Coast traders and the manner of life they lead out there; and I am convinced that if the English public had more of this sort of material it would recognise, as I, from a fairly extensive knowledge of West Coast traders, have been forced to recognise, that they are the class of white men out there who can be trusted to manage West Africa.

I most sincerely wish that the whole of this book had been written by such men as the authors of Appendices I. and II. We are seriously in want of reliable information on West African affairs. It is a sort of information you can only get from resident white men, those who live in close touch with the natives, and who are forced to know the truth about them in order to live and prosper, and from scientific trained observers. The transient traveller, passing rapidly through such a region as West Africa, is not so valuable an informant as he may be in other regions of the Earth, where his observations can be checked by those of acknowledged authorities, and supplemented by the literature of the natives to whom he refers. For on West Africa, outside Ellis's region, there is no authority newer than the eighteenth century, and the natives have no written literature. You must, therefore, go down to *Urstuff* and rely only on expert observers, whose lives and property

[1] Mr. McEachen first traded there in a hulk, but, after about two years, withdrew in 1873. No trade was done in this river by white men until Mr. Harford went in, since then it has continued.

depend on their observing well, or whose science trains them to observe carefully.

Now of course I regard myself as one of the second class of these observers: did I not do so I would not dare speak about West Africa at all, especially in such company; but whatever I am or whatever I do, requires explanation, apology, and thanks.

You may remember that after my return from a second sojourn in West Africa, when I had been to work at fetish and fresh-water fishes, I published a word-swamp of a book about the size of Norie's *Navigation*. Mr. George Macmillan lured me into so doing by stating that if I gave my own version of the affair I should remove misconceptions; and if I did not it was useless to object to such things as paragraphs in American papers to the effect that "Miss Kingsley, having crossed the continent of Africa, ascended the Niger to Victoria, and then climbed the Peak of Cameroon; she is shortly to return to England, when she will deliver a series of lectures on French art, which she has had great opportunities of studying." Well, thanks to Mr. Macmillan's kindness, I did publish a sort of interim report, called *Travels in West Africa*. It did not work out in the way he prophesied. It has led to my being referred to as "an intrepid explorer," a thing there is not the making of in me, who am ever the prey of frights, worries, and alarms; and its main effect, as far as I am personally concerned, has been to plunge me further still in debt for kindness from my fellow creatures, who, though capable of doing all I have done and more capable of writing about it in really good English, have tolerated that book and frequently me also, with half-a-dozen colds in my head and a dingy temper. Chief among all these creditors of

mine I must name Mrs. J. R. Green, Mrs. George Macmillan, and Miss Lucy Toulmin Smith; but don't imagine that they or any other of my creditors approve of any single solitary opinion I express, or the way in which I express it. It is merely that I have the power of bringing out in my fellow-creatures, white or black, their virtues, in a way honourable to them and fortunate for me.

I must here also acknowledge the great debt of gratitude I owe to Mr. John Holt, of Liverpool. A part of my work lies in the affairs of the so-called Bubies of Fernando Po, and no one knows so much about Fernando Po as Mr. Holt. He has also been of the greatest help to me in other ethnological questions, and has permitted me to go through his collections of African things most generously. It is, however, idle for me to attempt to chronicle my debt to Mr. Holt, for in every part of my work I owe him much. I do not wish you to think he is responsible for any of it, but his counsels have ever been on the side of moderation and generosity in adverse criticism. I honestly confess I believe I am by nature the very mildest of critics; but Mr. Holt and others think otherwise; and so, although I have not altered my opinions, I have restrained from publishing several developments of them, in deference to superior knowledge.

I am also under a debt of gratitude to Professor Tylor. He also is not involved in my opinions, but he kindly permits me to tell him things that I can only "tell Tylor"; and now and again, as you will see in the Fetish question, he comes down on me with a refreshing firmness; in fact, I feel that any attempt at fantastic explanations of West African culture will not receive any encouragement from him; and it is a great comfort to a mere drudge like myself

to know there is some one who cares for facts, without theories draping them.

I will merely add that to all my own West Coast friends I remain indebted; and that if you ever come across any one who says I owe them much, you may take it as a rule that I do, though in all my written stuff I have most carefully ticketed its source.

I now turn to the explanation and apology for this book, briefly. Apology for its literary style I do not make. I am not a literary man, only a student of West Africa. I am not proud of my imperfections in English. I would write better if I could, but I cannot. I find when I try to write like other people that I do not say what seems to me true, and thereby lose all right to say anything; and I am more convinced, the more I know of West Africa—my education is continuous and unbroken by holidays,—that it is a difficult thing to write about, particularly when you are a student hampered on all sides by masses of inchoate material, unaided by a set of great authors to whose opinions you can refer, and addressing a public that is not interested in the things that interest you so keenly and that you regard as so deeply important.

In my previous book I most carefully confined myself to facts and arranged those facts on as thin a line of connecting opinion as possible. I was anxious to see what manner of opinion they would give rise to in the minds of the educated experts up here; not from a mere feminine curiosity, but from a distrust in my own ability to construct theories. On the whole this method has worked well. Ethnologists of different theories have been enabled to use such facts as they saw fit; but one of the greatest of ethnologists has grumbled at me, not for not giving a theory, but for omitting

to show the inter-relationship of certain groups of facts, an inter-relationship his acuteness enabled him to know existed. Therefore I here give the key to a good deal of this inter-relationship by dividing the different classes of Fetishism into four schools. In order to do this I have now to place before you a good deal of material that was either crowded out of the other work or considered by me to require further investigation and comparison. As for the new statements I make, I have been enabled to give them this from the constant information and answers to questions I receive from West Africa. For the rest of the Fetish I remain a mere photographic plate.

Regarding the other sections of this book, they are to me all subsidiary in importance to the Fetish, but they belong to it. They refer to its environment, without a knowledge of which you cannot know the thing. What Mr. Macmillan has ticketed as Introductory—I could not find a name for it at all—has a certain bearing on West African affairs, as showing the life on a West Coast boat. I may remark it is a section crowded out of my previous book; so, though you may not be glad to see it here, you must be glad it was not there.

The fishing chapter was also cast out of *Travels in West Africa*. Critics whom I respect said it was wrong of me not to have explained how I came by my fishes. This made me fear that they thought I had stolen them, so I published the article promptly in the *National Review*, and, by the kindness of its editor, Mr. Maxse, I reprint it. It is the only reprint in this book.

The chapter on Law contains all the material I have been so far able to arrange on this important study. The material on Criminal Law I must keep until I can go out again to West Africa, and read further in the minds of

men in the African Forest Belt region; for in them, in that region, is the original text. The connection between Religion and Law I have not reprinted here, it being available, thanks to the courtesy of the Hibbert Trustees, in the *National Review*, September, 1897.

I have left my stiffest bit of explanation and apology till the last, namely, that relating to the Crown Colony system, which is the thing that makes me beg you to disassociate from me every friend I have, and deal with me alone. I am alone responsible for it, the only thing for which I may be regarded as sharing the responsibility with others being the statistics from Government sources.

It has been the most difficult thing I have ever had to do. I would have given my right hand to have done it well, for I know what it means if things go on as they are. Alas! I am hampered with my bad method of expression. I cannot show you anything clearly and neatly. I have to show you a series of pictures of things, and hope you will get from those pictures the impression which is the truth. I dare not set myself up to tell you the truth. I only say, look at it; and to the best of my ability faithfully give you, not an artist's picture, but a photograph, an overladen with detail, colourless version; all the time wishing to Heaven there was some one else doing it who could do it better, and then I know you would understand, and all would be well. I know there are people who tax me with a brutality in statement, I feel unjustly; and it makes me wonder what they would say if they had to speak about West Africa. It is a repetition of the difficulty a friend of mine and myself had over a steam launch called the Dragon Fly, whose internal health was chronically poor, and subject to bad attacks. Well, one afternoon, he and I had to take her out to the home-going steamer, and she had

suffered that afternoon in the engines, and when she suffered anywhere she let you know it. We did what we could for her, in the interests of humanity and ourselves; we gave her lots of oil, and fed her with delicately-chopped wood; but all to but little avail. So both our tempers being strained when we got to the steamer, we told her what the other one of us had been saying about the Dragon Fly. The purser of the steamer thereon said "that people who said things like those about a poor inanimate steam launch were fools with a flaming hot future, and lost souls entirely." We realised that our observations had been imperfect; and so, being ever desirous of improving ourselves, we offered to put the purser on shore in the Dragon Fly. We knew she was feeling still much the same, and we wanted to know what he would say when jets of superheated steam played on him. He came, and they did; and when they did, you know, he said things I cannot repeat. Nevertheless, things of the nature of our own remarks, but so much finer of the kind, that we regarded him with awe when he was returning thanks to the "poor inanimate steam launch"; but it was when it came to his going ashore, gladly to leave us and her, that we found out what that man could say; and we morally fainted at his remarks made on discovering that he had been sitting in a pool of smutty oil, which she had insidiously treated him to, in order to take some of the stuffing out of him about the superior snowwhiteness of his trousers. Well, that purser went off the scene in a blue flame; and I said to my companion, "Sir! we cannot say things like that." "Right you are, Miss Kingsley," he said sadly; "you and I are only fit for Sunday school entertainments."

It is thus with me about this Crown Colony affair. I know

I have not risen to the height other people—my superiors, like the purser—would rise to, if they knew it; but at the same time, I may seem to those who do not know it, who only know the good intentions of England, and who regard systems as inanimate things, to be speaking harshly. I would not have mentioned this affair at all, did I not clearly see that our present method of dealing with tropical possessions under the Crown Colony system was dangerous financially, and brought with it suffering to the native races and disgrace to English gentlemen, who are bound to obey and carry out the orders given them by the system.

Plotinus very properly said that the proper thing to do was to superimpose the idea upon the actual. I am not one of those who will ever tell you things are impossible, but I am particularly hopeful in this matter. England has an excellent idea regarding her duty to native races in West Africa. She has an excellent actual in the West African native to superimpose her idea upon. All that is wanted is the proper method; and this method I assure you that Science, true knowledge, that which Spinoza termed the inward aid of God, can give you. I am not Science, but only one of her brick-makers, and I beg you to turn to her. Remember you have tried to do without her in African matters for 400 years, and on the road to civilisation and advance there you have travelled on a cabbage leaf.

I have now only the pleasant duty of remarking that in this book I have said nothing regarding missionary questions. I do not think it will ever be necessary for me to mention those questions again except to Nonconformist missionaries. I say this advisedly, because, though I have not one word to retract of what I have said, the saying of it has demon-

strated to me the fearless honesty and the perfect chivalry in controversy of the Nonconformist missions in England. As they are the most extensively interested in West Africa, if on my next stay out in West Africa I find anything I regard as rather wrong in missionary affairs I intend to have it out within doors; for I know that the Nonconformists will be clear-headed, and fight fair, and stick to the point.

MARY H. KINGSLEY.

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WEST AFRICAN STUDIES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

Regarding a voyage on a West Coast boat, with some observations on the natural history of mariners never before published; to which is added some description of the habits and nature of the ant and other insects, to the end that the new-comer be informed concerning these things before he lands in Afrik.

THERE are some people who will tell you that the labour problem is the most difficult affair that Africa presents to the student; others give the first place to the influence of civilisation on native races, or to the interaction of the interests of the various white Powers on that continent, or to the successful sanitation of the said continent, or some other high-sounding thing; but I, who have an acquaintance with all these matters, and think them well enough, as intellectual exercises, yet look upon them as slight compared to the problem of the West Coast Boat.

Now life on board a West Coast steamer is an important factor in West African affairs, and its influence is far reaching. It is, indeed, akin to what the Press is in England, in that

it forms an immense amount of public opinion. It is on board the steamer that men from one part of West Africa meet men from another part of West Africa—parts of West Africa are different. These men talk things over together without explaining them, and the consequence is confusion in idea and the darkening of counsel from the ideas so formed being handed over to people at home who practically know no part of the West Coast whatsoever.

I had an example of this the other day, when a lady said to me in an aggrieved tone, after I had been saying a few words on swamps, "Oh, Miss Kingsley, but I thought it was wrong to talk about swamps nowadays, and that Africa was really quite dry. I have a cousin who has been to Accra and he says," &c. That's the way the formation of an erroneous opinion on West Africa gets started. Many a time have I with a scientific interest watched those erroneous opinions coming out of the egg on a West Coast boat. Say, for example, a Gold Coaster meets on the boat a River-man. River-man in course of conversation, states how, "hearing a fillaloo in the yard one night I got up and found the watchman going to sleep on the top of the ladder had just lost a leg by means of one crocodile, while another crocodile was kicking up a deuce of a row climbing up the crane." Gold Coaster says, "Tell that to the Marines." River-man says, "Perfect fact, Sir, my place swarms with crocodiles. Why, once, when I was," &c., &c. Anyhow it ends in a row. The Gold Coaster says, "Sir, I have been 7 years" (or 13 or some impressive number of years) "on the West Coast of Africa, Sir, and I have never seen a crocodile." River-man makes remarks on the existence of a toxic state wherein a man can't see the holes in a ladder, for he knows he's seen hundreds of crocodiles.

I know Gold Coasters say in a trying way when any terrific account of anything comes before them, "Oh, that was down in the Rivers," and one knows what they mean. But don't you go away with the idea that a Gold Coaster cannot turn out a very decent tale; indeed, considering the paucity of their material, they often display the artistic spirit to a most noteworthy degree, but the net result of the conversation on a West African steamboat is error. Parts of it, like the curate's egg, are quite excellent, but unless you have an acquaintance with the various regions of the Coast to which your various informants refer, you cannot know which is which. Take the above case and analyse it, and you will find it is almost all, on both sides, quite true. I won't go bail for the crocodile up the crane, but for the watchman's leg and the watchman being asleep on the top of the ladder I will, for watchmen will sleep anywhere; and once when I was, &c., I myself saw certainly not less than 70 crocodiles at one time, let alone smelling them, for they do swarm in places and stink always. But on the other hand the Gold Coaster might have remained 7, 13, or any other number of centuries instead of years, in a teetotal state, and yet have never seen a crocodile.

It may seem a reckless thing to say, but I believe that the great percentage of steamboat talk is true; only you must remember that it is not stuff that you can in any way use or rely on unless you know yourself the district from which the information comes, and it must, like all information—like all specimens of any kind—be very carefully ticketed, then and there, as to its giver and its district. In this it is again like the English Press, wherein you may see a statement one day that everything is quite satisfactory, say in Uganda, and in the next issue that there has been a

massacre or some unpleasantness. The two statements have in them the connecting thread of truth, that truth that, according to Fichte, is in all things. The first shows that it is the desire in the official mind that everything should be quite satisfactory to every one; the second, that practically this blessed state has not yet arrived—that is all.

I need not, however, further dwell on this complex phase, and will turn to the high educational value of the West African steamboat to the young Coaster, holding that on the conditions under which the Coaster makes his first voyage out to West Africa largely depends whether or no he takes to the Coast. Strange as it is to me, who love West Africa, there are people who have really been there who have not even liked it in the least. These people, I fancy, have not been properly brought up in a suitable academy as I was.

Doubtless a P. & O. is a good preparatory school for India, or a Union, or Castle liner for the Cape, or an Empereza Nacional simply superb for a Portuguese West Coast Possession, but for the Bights, especially for the terrible Bight of Benin, "where for one that comes out there are forty stay in," I have no hesitation in recommending the West Coast cargo boat. Not one of the best ships in the fleet, mind you; they are well enough to come home in, and so on, but you must go on a steamer that has her saloon aft on your first trip out or you will never understand West Africa.

It was on such a steamer that I made my first voyage out in '93, when, acting under the advice of most eminent men, before whose names European Science trembles, I resolved that the best place to study early religion and law, and collect fishes, was the West Coast of Africa.

On reaching Liverpool, where I knew no one and of which

I knew nothing in '93, I found the boat I was to go by was a veteran of the fleet. She had her saloon aft, and I am bound to say her appearance was anything but reassuring to the uninitiated and alarmed young Coaster, depressed by the direful prophecies of deserted friends concerning all things West African. Dirt and greed were that vessel's most obvious attributes. The dirt rapidly disappeared, and by the time she reached the end of her trip out, at Loanda, she was as neat as a new pin, for during the voyage every inch of paint work was scraped and re-painted, from the red below her Plimsoll mark to the uttermost top of her black funnel. But on the day when first we met these things were yet to be. As for her greed, her owners had evidently then done all they could to satisfy her. She was heavily laden, her holds more full than many a better ship's; but no, she was not content, she did not even pretend to be, and shamelessly whistled and squarked for more. So, evidently just to gratify her, they sent her a lighter laden with kegs of gunpowder, and she grunted contentedly as she saw it come alongside. But she was not really entirely content even then, or satisfied. I don't suppose, between ourselves, any South West Coast boat ever is, and during the whole time I was on her, devoted to her as I rapidly became, I saw only too clearly that the one thing she really cared for was cargo. It was the criterion by which she measured the importance, nay the very excuse for existence, of a port. If she is ever sold to other owners and sent up the Mediterranean, she will anathematise Malta and scorn Naples. "What! no palm oil!" she'll say; "no rubber? Call yourself a port!" and tie her whistle string to a stanchion until the authorities bring off her papers and let her clear away. Every one on board her she infected with a com-

mercial spirit. I am not by nature a commercial man myself, yet under her influence I found myself selling paraffin oil in cases in the Bights: and even to missionaries and Government officials travelling on her in between ports, she suggested the advisability of having out churches, houses, &c., in sections carefully marked with her name.

As we ran down the Irish Channel and into the Bay of Biscay, the weather was what the mariners termed "a bit fresh." Our craft was evidently a wet ship, either because she was nervous and femininely flurried when she saw a large wave coming, or, as I am myself inclined to believe, because of her insatiable mania for shipping cargo. Anyhow, she habitually sat down in the rise of those waves, whereby, from whatever motive, she managed to ship a good deal of the Atlantic Ocean in various sized sections.

Her saloon, as aforesaid, was aft, and I observed it was the duty, in order to keep it dry, of any one near the main door who might notice a ton or so of the fourth element coming aboard, to seize up three cocoa-fibre mats, shut three cabin doors and yell "Bill!" After doing this they were seemingly at full liberty to retire into the saloon and dam the Atlantic Ocean, and remark, "It's a dog's life at sea." I never noticed "Bill" come in answer to this performance, so I was getting to regard "Bill" as an invocation to a weather Ju Ju; but this was hasty, for one night in the Bay I was roused by a new noise, and on going into the saloon to see what it was, found the stewardess similarly engaged; mutually we discovered, in the dim light—she wasn't the boat to go and throw away money on electric—that it was the piano adrift off its dais, and we steered for it. Very cleverly we fielded *en route* a palm in pot complete, but shipped some beer and Worcester sauce bottles that came at us from the

rack over the table, whereby we got a bit messy and sticky about the hair and a trifle cut; nevertheless, undaunted we held our course and seized the instrument, instinctively shouting "Bill," and "Bill" came, in the form of a sandy-haired steward, amiable in nature and striking in costume.

After the first three or four days, a calm despair regarding the fate of my various lost belongings and myself having come on me, and the weather having moderated, I began to make observations on what manner of men my fellow-passengers were. I found only two species of the genus Coaster, the Government official and the trading Agent, were represented; so far we had no Missionaries. I decided to observe those species we had quietly, having heard awful accounts of them before leaving England, but to reserve final judgment on them until they had quite recovered from sea-sickness and had had a night ashore. Some of the Agents soon revived sufficiently to give copious information on the dangers and mortality of West Africa to those on board who were going down Coast for the first time, and the captain and doctor chipped in ever and anon with a particularly convincing tale of horror in support of their statements. This used to be the sort of thing. One of the Agents would look at the Captain during a meal-time, and say, "You remember J., Captain?" "Knew him well," says the Captain; "why I brought him out his last time, poor chap!" then follows full details of the pegging-out of J., and his funeral, &c. Then a Government official who had been out before, would kindly turn to a colleague out for the first time, and say, "Brought any dress clothes with you?" The unfortunate new comer, scenting an allusion to a more cheerful phase of Coast life, gladly answers in the affirmative.

"That's right," says the interlocutor; "you want them to wear at funerals. Do you know," he remarks, turning to another old Coaster, "my dress trousers did not get mouldy once last wet season."

"Get along," says his friend, "you can't hang a thing up twenty-four hours without its being fit to graze a cow on."

"Do you get anything else but fever down there?" asks a new comer, nervously.

"Haven't time as a general rule, but I have known some fellows get kraw kraw."

"And the Portuguese itch, abscesses, ulcers, the Guinea worm and the smallpox," observe the chorus calmly.

"Well," says the first answerer, kindly but regretfully, as if it pained him to admit this wealth of disease was denied his particular locality; "they are mostly on the South-west Coast." And then a gentleman says parasites are, as far as he knows, everywhere on the Coast, and some of them several yards long. "Do you remember poor C.?" says he to the Captain, who gives his usual answer, "Knew him well. Ah! poor chap, there was quite a quantity of him eaten away, inside and out, with parasites, and a quieter, better living man than C. there never was." "Never," says the chorus, sweeping away the hope that by taking care you may keep clear of such things—the new Coaster's great hope. "Where do you call—?" says a young victim consigned to that port. Some say it is on the South-west, but opinions differ, still the victim is left assured that it is just about the best place on the seaboard of the continent for a man to go to who wants to make himself into a sort of complete hospital course for a set of medical students.

This instruction of the young in the charms of Coast life is the faithfully discharged mission of the old Coasters

on steamboats, especially, as aforesaid, at meal times. Desperate victims sometimes determine to keep the conversation off fever, but to no avail. It is in the air you breath, mentally and physically; one will mention a lively and amusing work, some one cuts in and observes "Poor D. was found dead in bed at C. with that book alongside him." With all subjects it is the same. Keep clear of it in conversation, for even a half hour, you cannot. Far better is it for the young Coaster not to try, but just to collect all the anecdotes and information you can referring to it, and then lie low for a new Coaster of your own to tell them to, and when your own turn comes, as come it will if you haunt the West Coast long enough, to peg out and be poor so and so yourself. For goodness sake die somewhere where they haven't got the cemetery on a hill, because going up a hill in shirt collars, &c., will cause your mourners to peg out too, at least this is the lesson I was taught in that excellent West Coast school.

When, however, there is no new Coaster to instruct on hand, or he is tired for ten minutes of doing it, the old Coaster discourses with his fellow old Coasters on trade products and insects. Every attention should be given to him on these points. On trade products I will discourse elsewhere; but insects it is well that the new comer should know about before he sets foot on Africa. On some West Coast boats excellent training is afforded by the supply of cockroaches on board, and there is nothing like getting used to cockroaches early when your life is going to be spent on the Coast—but I need not detain you with them now, merely remarking that they have none of the modest reticence of the European variety. They are very companionable, seeking

rather than shunning human society, nestling in the bunk with you if the weather is the least chilly, and I fancy not averse to light; it is true they come out most at night, but then they distinctly like a bright light, and you can watch them in a tight packed circle round the lamp with their heads towards it, twirling their antennæ at it with evident satisfaction; in fact it's the lively nights those cockroaches have that keep them abed during the day. They are sometimes of great magnitude; I have been assured by observers of them in factories ashore and on moored hulks that they can stand on their hind legs and drink out of a quart jug, but the most common steamer kind is smaller, as far as my own observations go. But what I do object to in them is, that they fly and feed on your hair and nails and disturb your sleep by so doing; and you mayn't smash them—they make an awful mess if you do. As for insect powder, well, I'd like to see the insect powder that would disturb the digestion of a West African insect.

But it's against the insects ashore that you have to be specially warned. During my first few weeks of Africa I took a general natural historical interest in them with enthusiasm as of natural history; it soon became a mere sporting one, though equally enthusiastic at first. Afterwards a nearly complete indifference set in, unless some wretch aroused a vengeful spirit in me by stinging or biting. I should say, looking back calmly upon the matter, that 75 per cent. of West African insects sting, 5 per cent. bite, and the rest are either permanently or temporarily parasitic on the human race. And undoubtedly one of the many worst things you can do in West Africa is to take any notice of an insect. If you see a thing that looks like a cross between a flying lobster and the figure of Abraxas on

a Gnostic gem, do not pay it the least attention, never mind where it is; just keep quiet and hope it will go away—for that's your best chance; you have none in a stand-up fight with a good thorough-going African insect. Well do I remember, at Cabinda, the way insects used to come in round the hanging lamp at dinner time. Mosquitoes were pretty bad there, not so bad as in some other places, but sufficient, and after them hawking came a cloud of dragon-flies, swishing in front of every one's face, which was worrying till you got used to it. Ever and anon a big beetle, with a terrific boom on, would sweep in, go two or three times round the room and then flop into the soup plate, out of that, shake himself like a retriever and bang into some one's face, then flop on the floor. Orders were then calmly but firmly given to the steward boys to "catch 'em;" down on the floor went the boys, and an exciting hunt took place which sometimes ended in a capture of the offender, but always seemed to irritate a previously quiet insect population who forthwith declared war on the human species, and fastened on to the nearest leg. It is best, as I have said, to leave insects alone. Of course you cannot ignore driver ants, they won't go away, but the same principle reversed is best for them, namely, your going away yourself.

One way and another we talked a good deal of insects as well as fever on the ——, but she herself was fairly free from these until she got a chance of shipping; then, of course, she did her best—with the flea line at Canary, mixed assortment at Sierra Leone, scorpions and centipedes in the Timber ports, heavy cargo of the beetle and mangrove-fly line, with mosquitoes for dunnage, in the Oil Rivers; it was not till she reached Congo—but of that anon.

We duly reached Canary. This port I had been to the pre-

vious year on a Castle liner, having, in those remote and dark ages, been taught to believe that Liverpool boats were to be avoided; I was, so far, in a state of mere transition of opinion from this view to the one I at present hold, namely, that Liverpool West African boats are quite the most perfect things in their way, and, at any rate, good enough for me.

I need not discourse on the Grand Canary; there are many better descriptions of that lovely island, and likewise of its sister, Teneriffe, than I could give you. I could, indeed give you an account of these islands, particularly "when a West Coast boat is in from South," that would show another side of the island life; but I forbear, because it would, perhaps, cause you to think ill of the West Coaster unjustly; for the West Coaster, when he lands on the island of the Grand Canary, homeward bound, and realises he has a good reasonable chance to see his home and England again, is not in a normal state, and prone to fall under the influence of excitement, and display emotions that he would not dream of either on the West Coast itself or in England. Indeed, it is not too much to say that on the Canary Islands a good deal of the erroneous prejudice against West Africa is formed; but this is not the place to go into details on the subject.

It was not until we left Canary that my fellow passengers on the —— realised that I was going to "the Coast." They had most civilly bidden me good-bye when they were ashore on the morning of our arrival at Las Palmas; and they were surprised at my presence on board at dinner, as attentive to their conversation as ever. They explained that they had regarded me at first as a lady missionary, until my failure, during a Sunday service in

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SANTA CRUZ, TENERIFFE

the Bay of Biscay, to rescue it from the dire confusion into which it had been thrown by an esteemed and able officer and a dutiful but inexperienced Purser caused them to regard me as only a very early visitor to Canary. Now they required explanation. I said I was interested in Natural History. "Botany," they said, "They had known some men who had come out from Kew, but they were all dead now."

I denied a connection with Kew, and in order to give an air of definiteness to my intentions, remembering I had been instructed that "one of the worst things you can do in West Africa is to be indefinite," I said I was interested in the South Antarctic Drift—I was in those days.

They promptly fell into the pit of error that this was a gold mine speculation, and said they had "never heard of such a mine." I attempted to extricate them from this idea, and succeeded, except with a deaf gentleman who kept on sweeping into the conversation with yarns and opinions on gold mines in West Africa and the awful mortality among people who attended to such things, which naturally led to a prolonged discussion ending in a general resolution that people who had anything to do with gold mines generally died rather quicker even than men from Kew. Indeed, it took me days to get myself explained, and when it was accomplished I found I had nearly got myself regarded as a lunatic to go to West Africa for such reasons. But fortunately for me, and for many others who have ventured into this kingdom, the West African merchants are good-hearted, hospitable English gentlemen, who seem to feel it their duty that no harm they can prevent should happen to any one; and my first friends, among them my fellow passengers on the ——, failing in inducing

me to return from Sierra Leone, which they strongly advised, did their best to save me by means of education. The things they thought I "really ought to know" would make wild reading if published in extenso. Led by the kindest and most helpful of captains, they poured in information, and I acquired a taste for "facts"—any sort of facts about anything—a taste when applied to West African facts, that I fancy ranks with that for collecting venomous serpents; but to my listening to everything that was told me by my first instructors, and believing in it, undoubtedly I have often owed my life, and countless times have been enabled to steer neatly through shoaly circumstances ashore.

Our captain was not a man who would deliberately alarm a new comer, or shock any one, particularly a lady; indeed, he deliberately attempted to avoid so doing. He held it wrong to dwell on the dark side of Coast life, he said, "because youngsters going out were frequently so frightened on board the boats that they died as soon as they got on shore of the first cold they got in the head, thinking it was Yellow Jack"; so he always started conversation at meal times with anecdotes of his early years on an ancestral ranch in America. One great charm about "facts" is that you never know but what they may come in useful; so I eagerly got up a quantity of very strange information on the conduct of the American cow. He would then wander away among the China Seas or the Indian Ocean, and I could pass an examination on the social habits of captains of sailing vessels that ran to Bombay in old days. Sometimes the discourse visited the South American ports, and I took on information that will come in very handy should I ever find myself wander-

ing about the streets of Callao after dark, searching for a tavern. But the turn that serious conversation always drifted into was the one that interested me most, that relating to the Coast. Particularly interesting were those tales of the old times and the men who first established the palm oil trade. They were, many of them, men who had been engaged in the slave trade, and on the suppression thereof they turned their attention to palm oil, to which end their knowledge of the locality and of the native chiefs and their commercial methods was of the greatest help. Their ideas were possibly not those at present in fashion, but the courage and enterprise those men displayed under the most depressing and deadly conditions made me proud of being a woman of the nation that turned out the "Palm oil ruffians"—Drake, Hawkins, the two Roberts, Frobisher, and Hudson—it is as good as being born a foreign gentleman.

There was one of these old coasters of the palm oil ruffian type who especially interested me. He is dead now. For the matter of that he died at a mature age the year I was born, and I am in hopes of collecting facts sufficient to enable me to publish his complete biography. He lived up a creek, threw boots at leopards, and "had really swell spittoons, you know, shaped like puncheons, and bound with brass." I am sure it is unnecessary for me to mention his name.

Two of the old Coasters never spoke unless they had something useful and improving to say. They were Scotch; indeed, most of us were that trip, and I often used to wonder if the South Atlantic Ocean were broad enough for the accent of the "a," or whether strange sounds would ever worry and alarm Central America and the Brazils.

For general social purposes these silent ones used coughs, and the one whose seat was always next to mine at table kept me in a state of much anxiety, for I used to turn round, after having been riveted to the captain's conversation for minutes, and find him holding some dish for me to help myself from ; he never took the least notice of my apologies, and I felt he had made up his mind that, if I did it again, he should take me by the scruff of my neck some night and drop me overboard. He was an alarmingly powerfully built man, and I quite understood the local African tribe wishing to have him for a specimen. Some short time before he had left for home last trip, they had attempted to acquire his head for their local ju ju house, from mixed æsthetic and religious reasons. In a way, it was creditable of them, I suppose, for it would have caused them grave domestic inconvenience to have removed thereby at one fell swoop, their complete set of tradesmen ; and as a fellow collector of specimens I am bound to admit the soundness of their methods of collecting! Wishing for this gentleman's head they shot him in the legs. I have never gone in for collecting specimens of hominidae but still a recital of the incident did not fire me with a desire to repeat their performance ; indeed, so discouraged was I by their failure that I hesitated about asking him for his skeleton when he had quite done with it, though it was gall and wormwood to think of a really fine thing like that falling into the hands of another collector.

The run from Canary to Sierra Leone takes about a week. That part of it which lies in the track of the N.E. Trade Winds, *i.e.*, from Canary to Cape Verde, makes you believe Mr. Kipling when he sang—

"There are many ways to take
Of the eagle and the snake,
And the way of a man with a maid;
But the sweetest way for me
Is a ship upon the sea
On the track of the North-East trade."

was displaying, gracefully, a sensible choice of things; but you only feel this outward bound to the West Coast. When you come up from the Coast, fever stricken, homeward bound, you think otherwise. I do not mean to say that owing to a disintegrating moral effect of West Africa you wish to pursue the other ways mentioned in the stanza, but you do wish the Powers above would send that wind to the Powers below and get it warmed. Alas! it is in this Trade Wind zone that most men die, coming up from the Coast sick with fever, and it is to the blame of the Trade Wind that you see obituary notices—"of fever after leaving Sierra Leone." Nevertheless, outward bound the thing is delightful, and dreadfully you feel its loss when you have run through it as you close in to the African land by Cape Verde. At any rate I did; and I began to believe every bad thing I had ever heard of West Africa, and straightway said to myself, what every man has said to himself who has gone there since Hanno of Carthage, "Why was I such a fool as to come to such an awful place?" It is the first meeting with the hot breath of the Bights that tries one; it is the breath of Death himself to many. You feel when first you meet it you have done with all else; not alone is it hot, but it smells—smells like nothing else. It does not smell all it can then; by and by, down in the Rivers, you get its perfection, but off Cape Verde you have to ask yourself, "Can I live in this or no?" and

you have to leave it, like all other such questions, to Allah, and go on.

We passed close in to Cape Verde, which consists of rounded hills having steep bases to the sea. From these bases runs out a low, long strip of sandy soil, which is the true cape. Beyond, under water, runs out the dangerous Almadia reef, on which were still, in '93, to be seen the remains of the *Port Douglas*, who was wrecked there on her way to Australia in '92. Her passengers were got ashore and most kindly treated by the French officers of Senegal; and finally, to the great joy and relief of their rescuers the said passengers were fetched away by an English vessel, and taken to what England said was their destination and home, Australia, but what France regarded as merely a stage on their journey to hell, to which port they had plainly been consigned.

It was just south of Cape Verde that I met my first tornado. The weather had been wet in violent showers all the morning and afternoon. Our old Coasters took but little notice of it, resigning themselves to saturation without a struggle, previous experience having taught them it was the best thing to do, dryness being an unattainable state during the wet season, and "worrying one's self about anything one of the worst things you can do in West Africa." So they sat on deck calmly smoking, their new flannel suits, which were donned after leaving the trade winds, shrinking, and their colours running on to the other deck, uncriticised even by the First officer. He was charging about shouting directions and generally making that afternoon such a wild, hurrying fuss about "getting in awnings," "tricing up all loose gear," such as deck chairs, and so on, to permanent parts of the——, that, as nothing beyond

showers had happened, and there was no wind, I began to feel most anxious about his mental state. But I soon saw that this activity was the working of a practical prophetic spirit in the man, and these alarms and excursions of his arose from a knowledge of what that low arch of black cloud coming off the land meant.

We were surrounded by a wild, strange sky. Indeed, there seemed to be two skies, one upper, and one lower; for parts of it were showing evidences of terrific activity, others of a sublime, utterly indifferent calm. At one part of our horizon were great columns of black cloud, expanding and coalescing at their capitals. These were mounted on a background of most exquisite pale green. Away to leeward was a gigantic black cloud-mountain, across whose vast face were bands and wreaths of delicate white and silver clouds, and from whose grim depths every few seconds flashed palpitating, fitful, livid lightnings. Striding towards us came across the sea the tornado, lashing it into spray mist with the tremendous artillery of its rain, and shaking the air with its own thunder-growls. Away to windward leisurely boomed and grumbled a third thunderstorm, apparently not addressing the tornado but the cloud-mountain, while in between these phenomena wandered strange, wild winds, made out of lost souls frightened and wailing to be let back into Hell, or taken care of somehow by some one. This sort of thing naturally excited the sea, and all together excited the ——, who, not being built so much for the open and deep sea as for the shoal bars of West African rivers, made the most of it.

In a few seconds the wind of the tornado struck us, screaming through the rigging, eager for awnings or any loose gear, but foiled of its prey by the First officer, who

stood triumphantly on a heap of them, like a defiant hen guarding her chickens.

Some one really ought to write a monograph on the natural history of mariners. They are valuable beings, and their habits are exceedingly interesting. I myself, being already engaged in the study of other organisms, cannot undertake the work; however, I place my observations at the disposal of any fellow naturalist who may have more time, and certainly will have more ability.

The sailor officer (*Nauta pelagius vel officinalis*) is metamorphic. The stage at which the specimen you may be observing has arrived is easily determined by the band of galoon round his coat cuff; in the English form the number of gold stripes increasing in direct ratio with rank. The galoon markings of the foreign species are frequently merely decorative, and in many foreign varieties only conditioned by the extent of surface available to display them and the ability of the individual to acquire the galoon wherewith to decorate himself.

The English third officer, you will find, has one stripe, the second two, the first three, and the *imago*, or captain, four, the upper one having a triumphant twist at the top.

You may observe, perhaps, about the ship sub-varieties, having a red velvet, or a white or blue velvet band on the coat cuff; these are respectively the Doctor, Purser, and Chief engineer; but with these sub-varieties I will not deal now, they are not essentially marine organisms, but akin to the amphibia.

The metamorphosis is as clearly marked in the individual as in the physical characteristics. A third officer is a hard-working individual who has to do any

thing that the other officers do not feel inclined to, and therefore rarely has time to wash. He in course of time becomes second officer, and the slave of the hatch. During this period of his metamorphosis he feels no compunction whatever in hauling out and dumping on the deck burst bacon barrels or leaking lime casks, actions which, when he reaches the next stage of development, he will regard as undistinguishable in a moral point of view from a compound commission of the seven deadly sins. For the deck, be it known, is to the First officer the most important thing in the cosmogony,and there is probably nothing he would not sacrifice to its complexion. One that I had the pleasure of knowing once lamented to me that he was not allowed by his then owners to spread a layer of ripe pineapples upon his precious idol, and let them be well trampled in and then lie a few hours, for this he assured me gave a most satisfactory bloom to a deck's complexion. Yet when this same man becomes a captain and grows another stripe round his cuffs, he no longer takes an active part in the ship's household affairs, that is his First officer's business, the ship's husband's affair; and should he have an inefficient First the captain expects Men and Nations to sympathise with him, just as a lady expects to be sympathised with over a bad housemaid.

There are, however, two habits which are constant to all the species through each stage of transformation from roustabout to captain. One is a love of painting. I have never known an officer or captain who could pass a paint-pot, with the brush sticking temptingly out, without emotion. While, as for Jack, the happiest hours he knows seemingly are those he spends sitting on a slung plank over the side of his ocean home, with his bare feet dangling a few feet above

the water as tempting bait for sharks, and the tropical sun blazing down on him and reflected back at him from the iron ship's side and from the oily ocean beneath. Then he carols forth his amorous lay, and shouts, "Bill, pass that paint-pot" in his jolliest tones. It is very rarely that a black seaman is treated to a paint-pot; all they are allowed to do is to knock off the old stuff, which they do in the nerveless way the African does most handicraft. The greatest dissipation of the black hands department consists in being allowed to knock the old stuff off the steam-pipe covers, donkey, and funnel. This is a delicious occupation, because, firstly, you can usually sit while doing it, and secondly, you can make a deafening din and sing to it.

The other habit and the more widely known is the animistic view your seaman takes of Nature. Every article that is to a landsman an article and nothing more, is to him an individual with a will and mind of his own. I myself believe there is something in it. I feel sure that a certain hawser on board the —— had a weird influence on the minds of all men who associated with it. It was used at Liverpool coming out of dock, but owing to the absence of harbours on the Coast it was not required again until it tied our ocean liner up to a tree stump at Boma, on the Congo. Nevertheless it didn't suit that hawser's views to be down below in the run and see nothing of life. It insisted on remaining on deck, and the officers gave in to it and said "Well, perhaps it was better so, it would rot if it went down below," so some days it abode on the quarter-deck, some days on the main, and now and again it would condescend to lie on the fo'castle, head in the sun. It had too its varying moods of tidiness, now neat and

dandy coiled, now dishevelled and slummocky after association with the Kru boys.

It is almost unnecessary to remark that the relationship between the First officer and the Chief engineer is rarely amicable. I certainly did once hear a First officer pray especially for a Chief engineer all to himself under his breath at a Sunday service; but I do not feel certain that this was a display of true affection. I am bound to admit that "the engineer is messy," which is magnanimous of me, because I had almost always a row of some kind on with the First officer, owing to other people upsetting my ink on his deck, whereas I have never fallen out with an engineer—on the contrary, two Chief engineers are amongst the most valued friends I possess.

The worst of it is that no amount of experience will drive it into the head of the First officer that the engineer will want coal—particularly and exactly when the ship has just been thoroughly scrubbed and painted to go into port. I have not been at sea so long as many officers, yet I know that you might as well try and get a confirmed dipsomaniac past a grog shop as the engineer past, say the Canary Coaling Company; indeed he seems to smell the Dakar coal, and hankers after it when passing it miles out to sea. Then, again, if the engineer is allowed to have a coal deposit in the forehold it is a fresh blow and grief to the First officer to find he likes to take them as Mrs. Gamp did her stimulant, when she "feels dispoged," whether the deck has just been washed down or no.

The cook, although he always has a blood feud on with the engineer concerning coals for the galley fire, which should endear him to the First officer, is morally a greater trial to the First than he is to his other victims. You

see the cook has a grease tub, and what that means to the deck in a high sea is too painful to describe. So I leave the First officer with his pathetic and powerful appeals to the immortal gods to be told why it is his fate to be condemned to this "dog's life on a floating Hanwell lunatic asylum," commending him to the sympathetic consideration of all good housewives, for only they can understand what that dear good man goes through.

After we passed Cape Verde we ran into the West African wet season rain sheet. There ought to be some other word than rain for that sort of thing. We have to stiffen this poor substantive up with adjectives, even for use with our own thunderstorms, and as is the morning dew to our heaviest thunder "torrential downpour of rain," so is that to the rain of the wet season in West Africa. For weeks it came down on us that voyage in one swishing, rushing cataract of water. The interspaces between the pipes of water—for it did not go into details with drops—were filled with gray mist, and as this rain struck the sea it kicked up such a water dust that you saw not the surface of the sea round you, but only a mist sea gliding by. It seemed as though we had left the clear cut world and entered into a mist universe. Sky, air, and sea were all the same, as our vessel swept on in one plane, just because she capriciously preferred it. Many days we could not see twenty yards from the ship. Once or twice another vessel would come out of the mist ahead, slogging past us into the mist behind, visible in our little water world for a few minutes only as a misty thing, and then we leisurely tramped on alone "o'er the viewless, hueless deep," with our horizon alongside.

If you cleared your mind of all prejudice the thing was

really not uncomfortable, and it seemed restful to the mind. As I used to be sitting on deck every one who came across me would say, "Wet, isn't it? Well, you see this is the wet season on the Coast"—or, "Damp, isn't it? Well, you see this is the wet season on the Coast"—and then they went away, and, I believe slept for hours exhausted by their educational efforts. After this they would come on deck and sit in their respective chairs, smoking, save that irrepressible deaf gentleman, who spent his time squirrel like between vivid activity and complete quiescence. You might pass the smoking room door and observe the soles of his shoes sticking out off the end of the settee with an air of perfect restful calm hovering over them, as if the owner were hibernating for the next six months. Within two minutes after this an uproar on the poop would inform the experienced ear that he was up and about again, and had found some one asleep on a chair and attacked him.

It was during one of these days, furnishing reminiscences of Noah's flood, that conversation turned suddenly on Driver ants. One of the silent men, who had been sitting for an hour or so, with a countenance indicative of a contemplative acceptance of the penitential psalms, roused by one of the deaf man's rows, observed, "Paraffin is good for Driver ants." "Oh," said the deaf gentleman as he sat suddenly down on my ink-pot, which, for my convenience, was on a chair, "you wait till you get them up your legs, or sit down among them, as I saw Smith, when he was tired clearing bush. They took the tire out of him, he live for scratch one time. Smith was a pocket circus. You should have seen him get clear of his divided skirt. Oh lor! what price paraffin?"

The conversation on the Driver ant now became general.

As far as I remember, Mr. Burnand, who in *Happy Thoughts* and *My Health*, gave much information, curious and interesting, on earwigs and wasps, omitted this interesting insect. So, perhaps, a *précis* of the information I obtained may be interesting. I learnt that the only thing to do when you have got them on you is to adopt the course of action pursued by Brer Fox on that occasion when he was left to himself enough to go and buy ointment from Brer Rabbit, namely, make "a burst for the creek," water being the quickest thing to make them leave go. Unfortunately, the first time I had occasion to apply this short and easy method with the ant was when I was strolling about by Bell-Town with a white gentleman and his wife, and we strolled into Drivers. There were only two water-barrels in the vicinity, and my companions, being more active than myself, occupied them.

While in West Africa you should always keep an eye lifting for Drivers. You can start doing it as soon as you land, which will postpone the catastrophe, not avoid it; for the song of the West Coaster to his enemy is truly, "Some day, some day, some day I shall meet you; Love, I know not when nor how." Perhaps, therefore, this being so, and watchfulness a strain when done deliberately, and worrying one of the worst things you can do in West Africa, it may be just as well for you to let things slide down the time-stream until Fate sends a column of the wretches up your legs. This experience will remain "indelibly limned on the tablets of your mind when a yesterday has faded from its page," or, as the modern school of psychologists would have it, "The affair will be brought to the notice of your sublimated consciousness, and that part of your mind will watch for Drivers without

worrying you, and an automatic habit will be induced that will cause you never to let more than one eye roam spell-bound over the beauties of the African landscape; the other will keep fixed, turned to the soil at your feet."

The Driver is of the species *Ponera*, and is generally referred to the species *anomma arcens*. The females and workers of these ants are provided with stings as well as well-developed jaws. They work both for all they are worth, driving the latter into your flesh, enthusiastically up to the hilt; they then remain therein, keeping up irritation when you have hastily torn their owner off in response to a sensation that is like that of red hot pinchers. The full-grown worker is about half an inch long, and without ocelli even. Yet one of the most remarkable among his many crimes is that he will always first attack the eyes of any victim. These creatures seem to have no settled home; no man has seen the beginning or end, as far as I know, of one of their long trains. As you are watching the ground you see a ribbon of glistening black, one portion of it lost in one clump of vegetation, the other in another, and on looking closer you see that it is an *acies instituta* of Driver ants. If you stir the column up with a stick they make a peculiar fizzing noise, and open out in all directions in search of the enemy, which you take care they don't find.

These ants are sometimes also called "visiting ants," from their habit of calling in quantities at inconvenient hours on humanity. They are fond of marching at night, and drop in on your house usually after you have gone to bed. I fancy, however, they are about in the daytime as well, even in the brightest weather; but it is certain that it is in dull, wet weather, and after dusk, that you come

across them most on paths and open spaces. At other times and hours they make their way among the tangled ground vegetation.

Their migrations are infinite, and they create some of the most brilliant sensations that occur in West Africa, replacing to the English exile there his lost burst water pipes of winter, and such like things, while they enforce healthy and brisk exercise upon the African.

I will not enter into particulars about the customary white man's method of receiving a visit of Drivers, those methods being alike ineffective and accompanied by dreadful language. Barricading the house with a rim of red hot ashes, or a river of burning paraffin, merely adds to the inconvenience and endangers the establishment.

The native method with the Driver ant is different: one minute there will be peace in the simple African home, the heavy-scented hot night air broken only by the rhythmic snores and automatic side slaps of the family, accompanied outside by a chorus of cicadas and bull frogs. Enter the Driver—the next moment that night is thick with hurrying black forms, little and big, for the family, accompanied by rats, cockroaches, snakes, scorpions, centipedes, and huge spiders animated by the one desire to get out of the visitors' way, fall helter skelter into the street, where they are joined by the rest of the inhabitants of the village, for the ants when they once start on a village usually make a regular house-to-house visitation. I mixed myself up once in a delightful knockabout farce near Kabinda, and possibly made the biggest fool of myself I ever did. I was in a little village, and out of a hut came the owner and his family and all the household parasites pell mell, leaving the Drivers in possession ; but the mother and father of the

family, when they recovered from this unwonted burst of activity, showed such a lively concern, and such unmistakable signs of anguish at having left something behind them in the hut, that I thought it must be the baby. Although not a family man myself, the idea of that innocent infant perishing in such an appalling manner roused me to action, and I joined the frenzied group, crying, "Where him live?" "In him far corner for floor!" shrieked the distracted parents, and into that hut I charged. Too true! There in the corner lay the poor little thing, a mere inert black mass, with hundreds of cruel Drivers already swarming upon it. To seize it and give it to the distracted mother was, as the reporter would say, "the work of an instant." She gave a cry of joy and dropped it instantly into a water barrel, where her husband held it down with a hoe, chuckling contentedly. Shiver not, my friend, at the callousness of the Ethiopian; that there thing wasn't an infant—it was a ham!

These ants clear a house completely of all its owner's afflictions in the way of vermin, killing and eating all they can get hold of. They will also make short work of any meat they come across, but don't care about flour or biscuits. Like their patron Mephistopheles, however, they do not care for carrion, nor do they destroy furniture or stuffs. Indeed they are typically West African, namely, good and bad mixed. In a few hours they leave the house again on their march through the Ewigkeit, which they enliven with criminal proceedings. Yet in spite of the advantage they confer on humanity, I believe if the matter were put to the human vote, Africa would decide to do without the Driver ant. Mankind has never been sufficiently grateful to its charwomen, like these insect equivalents, who

do their tidying up at supremely inconvenient times. I remember an incident at one place in the Lower Congo where I had been informed that "cork fever" was epidemic in a severe form among the white population. I was returning to quarters from a beetle hunt, in pouring rain; it was as it often is, "the wet season," &c., when I saw a European gentleman about twenty yards from his comfortable-looking house seated on a chair, clad in a white cotton suit, umbrellaless, and with the water running off him as if he was in a douche bath. I had never seen a case of cork fever, but I had heard such marvellous and quaint tales of its symptoms that I thought—well, perhaps, anyhow, I would not open up conversation. To my remorse he said, as I passed him, "Drivers." Inwardly apologising, I outwardly commiserated him, and we discoursed. It was on this occasion that I saw a mantis, who is by way of being a very pretty pirate on his own account, surrounded by a mob of the blind hurrying Drivers who, I may remark, always attack like Red Indians in open order. That mantis perfectly well knew his danger, but was as cool as a cucumber, keeping quite quiet and lifting his legs out of the way of the blind enemies around him. But the chances of keeping six legs going clear, for long, among such brutes without any of them happening on one, were small, even though he only kept three on the ground at one time. So, being a devotee of personal courage, I rescued him—whereupon he bit me for my pains. Why didn't he fly? How can you fly, I should like to know, unless you have a jumping off place?

Drivers are indeed dreadful. I was at one place where there had been a white gentleman and a birthday party in the evening; he stumbled on his way home and went

to sleep by the path side, and in the morning there was only a white gentleman's skeleton and clothes.

However, I will dwell no more on them now. Wretches that they are, they have even in spirit pursued me to England, causing a critic to observe that *brevi spatio interjecto* is my only Latin, whereas the matter is this. I was once in distinguished society in West Africa that included other ladies. We had a distinguished native gentleman, who had had an European education, come to tea with us. The conversation turned on Drivers, for one of the ladies had the previous evening had her house invaded by them at midnight. She snatched up a blanket, wrapped herself round with it, unfortunately allowed one corner thereof to trail, whereby it swept up Drivers, and awful scenes followed. Then our visitor gave us many reminiscences of his own, winding up with one wherein he observed "*brevi spatio interjecto*, ladies; off came my breeches." After this we ladies all naturally used this phrase to describe rapid action.

There is another ant, which is commonly called the red Driver, but it is quite distinct from the above-mentioned black species. It is an unwholesome-looking, watery-red thing with long legs, and it abides among trees and bushes. An easy way of obtaining specimens of this ant is to go under a mango or other fruit tree and throw your cap at the fruit. You promptly get as many of these insects as the most ardent naturalist could desire, its bite being every bit as bad as that of the black Driver.

These red ones build nests with the leaves of the tree they reside on. The leaves are stuck together with what looks like spiders' webs. I have seen these nests the size of an apple, and sent a large one to the British Museum,

but I have been told of many larger nests than I have seen. These ants, unfortunately for me who share the taste, are particularly devoted to the fruit of the rubber vine, and also to that of a poisonous small-leaved creeping plant that bears the most disproportionately-sized spiny, viscid, yellow fruit. It is very difficult to come across specimens of either of these fruits that have not been eaten away by the red Driver.

It is a very fascinating thing to see the strange devices employed by many kinds of young seedlings and saplings to keep off these evidently unpopular tenants. They chiefly consist in having a sheath of exceedingly slippery surface round the lower part of the stem, which the ants slide off when they attempt to climb. I used to spend hours watching these affairs. You would see an ant dash for one of these protected stems as if he were a City man and his morning train on the point of starting from the top of the plant stem. He would get up half an inch or so because of the dust round the bottom helping him a bit, then, getting no holding-ground, off he would slip, and falling on his back, desperately kick himself right side up, and go at it again as if he had heard the bell go, only to meet with a similar rebuff. The plants are most forbearing teachers, and their behaviour in every way a credit to them. I hope that they may in time have a moral and educational effect on this overrated insect, enabling him to realise how wrong it is for him to force himself where he is not welcome; but a few more thousand years, I fear, will elapse before the ant is anything but a chuckleheaded, obstinate wretch. Nothing nowadays but his happening to fall off with his head in the direction of some other vegetable frees the slippery plant from his attempts. To

this other something off he rushes, and if it happens to be a plant that does not mind him up he goes, and I have no doubt congratulates himself on having carried out his original intentions, understanding the world, not being the man to put up with nonsense and all that sort of thing, whereas it is the plant that manages him. Some plants don't mind ants knocking about among the grown-up leaves, but will not have them with the infants, and so cover their young stuff with a fur or down wherewith the ant can do nothing. Others, again, keep him and feed him with sweetstuff so that he should keep off other enemies from its fruit, &c. But I have not space to sing in full the high intelligence of West African vegetation, and I am no botanist; yet one cannot avoid being struck by it, it is so manifold and masterly.

Before closing these observations I must just mention that tiny, sandy-coloured abomination *Myriaica molesta*. In South West Africa it swarms, giving a quaint touch to domestic arrangements. No reckless putting down of basin, tin, or jam-pot there, least of all of the sugar-basin, unless the said sugar-basin is one of those commonly used in those parts, of rough, violet-coloured glass, with a similar lid. Since I left South West Africa I have read some interesting observations of Sir John Lubbock's on the dislike of ants to violet colour. I wonder if the Portuguese of Angola observed it long ago and adopted violet glass for basins, or was it merely accidental and empirical. I suspect the latter, or they would use violet glass for other articles. As it is, everything eatable in a house there is completely insulated in water—moats of water with a dash of vinegar in it—to guard it from the ants from below; to guard from the ants from above, the same

breed and not a bit better. Eatables are kept in swinging safes at the end of coir rope recently tarred. But when, in spite of these precautions, or from the neglect of them, you find, say your sugar, a brown, busy mass, just stand it in the full glare of the sun. Sun is a thing no ant likes, I believe, and it is particularly distasteful to ants with pale complexions; and so you can see them tear themselves away from their beloved sugar and clear off into a Hyde Park meeting smitten by a thunderstorm.

This kind of ant, or a nearly allied species, is found in houses in England, where it is supposed they have been imported from the Brazils or West Indies in 1828. Possibly the Brazils got it from South West Africa, with which they have had a trade since the sixteenth century, most of the Brazil slaves coming out of Congo. It is unlikely that the importation was the other way about; for exotic things, whether plants or animals, do not catch on in Western Africa as they do in Australia. In the former land everything of the kind requires constant care to keep it going at all, and protect it from the terrific local circumstances. It is no use saying to animal or vegetable, "there is room for all in Africa"—for Africa, that is Africa properly so called—Equatorial West Africa, is full up with its own stuff now, crowded and fighting an internecine battle with the most marvellous adaptations to its environment.

CHAPTER II

SIERRA LEONE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

Concerning the perils that beset the navigator in the Baixos of St. Ann, with some description of the country between the Sierra Leone and Cape Palmas and the reasons wherefrom it came to be called the Pepper, Grain, or Meleguetta Coast.

IT was late evening-time when the —— reached that part of the South Atlantic Ocean where previous experience and dead reckoning led our captain to believe that Sierra Leone existed. The weather was too thick to see ten yards from the ship, so he, remembering certain captains who, under similar circumstances, failing to pick up the light on Cape Sierra Leone, had picked up the Carpenter Rock with their keels instead, let go his anchor, and kept us rolling about outside until the morning came. Slipperty slop, crash! slipperty slop, crash! went all loose gear on board all the night long; and those of the passengers who went in for that sort of thing were ill from the change of motion. The mist, our world, went gently into grey, and then black, growing into a dense darkness filled with palpable, woolly, wet air, thicker far than it had been before. This, my instructors informed me, was caused by the admixture of the "solid malaria coming off the land."

However, morning came at last, and even I was on deck as it dawned, and was rewarded for my unwonted activity by a vision of beautiful, definite earth-form dramatically un-

veiled. No longer was the —— our only material world. The mist lifted itself gently off, as it seemed, out of the ocean, and then separated before the morning breeze; one great mass rolling away before us upwards, over the land, where portions of it caught amongst the forests of the mountains and stayed there all day, while another mass went leisurely away to the low Bullam shore, from whence it came again after sunset to join the mountain and the ocean mists as they drew down and in from the sea, helping them to wrap up Freetown, Sierra Leone and its lovely harbour for the night.

It was with a thrill of joy that I looked on Freetown harbour for the first time in my life. I knew the place so well. Yes; there were all the bays, Kru, English and Pirate; and the mountains, whose thunder rumbling caused Pedro do Centra to call the place Sierra Leona when he discovered it in 1462. And had not my old friend, Charles Johnson, writing in 1724, given me all manner of information about it during those delicious hours rescued from school books and dedicated to a most contentious study of *A General History of Robberies and Murders of the most Notorious Pyrates*? That those bays away now on my right hand "were safe and convenient for cleaning and watering;" and so on and there rose up before my eyes a vision of the society ashore here in 1724 that lived "very friendly with the natives—being thirty Englishmen in all; men who in some part of their lives had been either privateering, buccaneering, or pirating, and still retain and have the riots and humours common to that sort of life." Hard by, too, was Bence Island, where, according to Johnson, "there lives an old fellow named *Crackers* (his true name he thinks fit to conceal), and who was formerly a noted buccaneer; he

keeps the best house in the place, has two or three guns before his door with which he salutes his friends the pyrates when they put in, and lives a jovial life with them all the while they are there." Alas! no use to me was the careful list old Johnson had given me of the residents. They were all dead now, and I could not go ashore and hunt up "Peter Brown" or "John Jones," who had "one long boat and an Irish young man." Social things were changed in Freetown, Sierra Leone; but only socially, for the old description of it is, as far as scenery goes, correct to-day, barring the town. Whether or no everything has changed for the better is not my business to discuss here, nor will I detain you with any description of the town, as I have already published one after several visits, with a better knowledge than I had on my first call there.

On one of my subsequent visits I fell in with Sierra Leone receiving a shock. We were sitting, after a warm and interesting morning spent going about the town talking trade, in the low long pleasant room belonging to the Coaling Company whose windows looked out over an eventful warehouse yard; for therein abode a large dog-faced baboon, who shied stones and sticks at boys and any one who displeased him, pretty nearly as well as a Flintshire man. Also in the yard were a large consignment of kola nuts packed as usual in native-made baskets, called bilys, lined inside with the large leaves of a Ficus and our host was explaining to my mariner companions their crimes towards this cargo while they defended themselves with spirit. It seemed that this precious product if not kept on deck made a point of heating and then going mildewed; while, if you did keep it on deck, either the First officer's minions went fooling about it with the hose, which

made it swell up and burst and ruined it, or left it in unmitigated sun, which shrivelled it—and so on. This led, naturally, to a general conversation on cargo between the mariners and the merchants, during which some dreadful things were said about the way matches arrived, in West Africa and other things, shipped at shipper's own risk, let alone the way trade suffered by stowing hams next the boilers. Of course the other side was a complete denial of these accusations, but the affair was too vital for any of us to attend to a notorious member of the party who kept bothering us "to get up and look at something queer over King Tom."

Now it was market day in Freetown; and market day there has got more noise to the square inch in it than most things. You feel when you first meet it that if it were increased a little more it would pass beyond the grasp of human ear, like the screech of that whistle they show off at the Royal Society's Conversazione. However, on this occasion the market place sent up an entire compound yell, still audible, and we rose as one man as the portly housekeeper, followed by the small, but able steward, burst into the room, announcing in excited tones, "Oh! the town be took by locusts! The town be took by locusts! (*D.C. fortissimo*). And we attended to the incident; ousting the reporter of "the queer thing over King Tom" from the window, and ignoring his "I told you so," because he hadn't.

This was the first cloud of locusts that had come right into the town in the memory of the oldest inhabitant, though they occasionally raid the country away to the North. I am informed that when the chiefs of the Western Soudan do not give sufficient gifts to the man who is locust king and has charge of them—keeping them in holes in the

desert of Sahara—he lets them out in revenge. Certainly that year he let them out with a vengeance, for when I was next time down Coast in the Oil Rivers I was presented with specimens that had been caught in Old Calabar and kept as big curios.

This Freetown swarm came up over the wooded hills to the South-West in a brown cloud of singular structure, denser in some parts than others, continually changing its points of greatest density, like one of Thompson's diagrams of the ultimate structure of gases, for you could see the component atoms as they swept by. They were swirling round and round upwards-downwards like the eddying snowflakes in a winter's storm, and the whole air rustled with the beat of the locusts' wings. They hailed against the steep iron roofs of the store-houses, slid down it, many falling feet through the air before they recovered the use of their wings—the gutters were soon full of them—the ducks in the yard below were gobbling and squabbling over the layer now covering the ground, and the baboon chattered as he seized handfuls and pulled them to pieces.

Everybody took them with excitement, save the jack crows, who on their arrival were sitting sleeping on the roof ridge. They were horribly bored and bothered by the affair. Twice they flopped down and tried them. There they were lying about in gutters with a tempting garbagey look, but evidently the jack crows found them absolutely mawkish; so they went back to the roof ridge in a fuming rage, because the locusts battered against them and prevented them from sleeping.

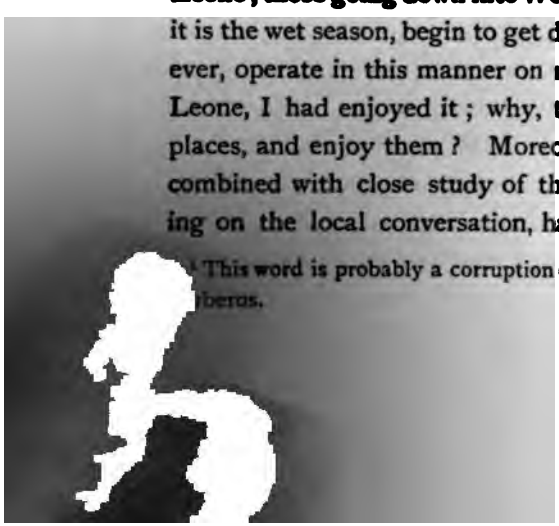
We left Sierra Leone on the —— late in the afternoon, and ran out again into the same misty wet weather. The

next morning the balance of our passengers were neither up early, nor lively when they were up ; but to my surprise, after what I had heard, no one had the much-prognosticated attack of fever. All day long we steamed onwards, passing the Banana Isles and Sherboro Island and the sound usually called Sherboro River.[1] We being a South-West Coast boat, did not call at the trading settlements here, but kept on past Cape St. Ann for the Kru coast.

All day long the rain came down as if thousands of energetic—well, let us say—angels were hurriedly baling the waters above the firmament out into the ocean. Everything on board was reeking wet.

You could sweep the moisture off the cabin panelling with your hand, and our clothes were clammy and musty, and the towels too damp on their own account to dry you. Why none of us started specialising branchiae I do not know, but feel that would have been the proper sort of breathing apparatus for such an atmosphere.

The passengers were all at the tail end of their spirits, for Sierra Leone is the definite beginning of the Coast to the out-goer. You are down there when you leave it outward bound ; it is indeed, the complement of Canary. Those going up out of West Africa begin to get excited at Sierra Leone ; those going down into West Africa, particularly when it is the wet season, begin to get depressed. It did not, however, operate in this manner on me. I had survived Sierra Leone, I had enjoyed it ; why, therefore, not survive other places, and enjoy them ? Moreover, my scientific training, combined with close study of the proper method of carrying on the local conversation, had by now enabled me to



[1] This word is probably a corruption of the old name for this district, Sherbros.

understand its true spirit,—never contradict, and, if you can, help it onward. When going on deck about 6 o'clock that evening, I was alarmed to see our gallant captain in red velvet slippers. A few minutes later the chief officer burst on my affrighted gaze in red velvet slippers too. On my way hurriedly to the saloon I encountered the third officer similarly shod. When I recovered from these successive shocks, I carried out my mission of alarming the rest of the passengers, who were in the saloon enjoying themselves peacefully, and reported what I had seen. The old coasters, even including the silent ones, agreed with me that we were as good as lost so far as this world went; and the deaf gentleman went hurriedly on deck, we think "to take the sun,"—it was a way he had at any time of day, because "he had been studying about how to fix points for the Government—and wished to keep himself in practice."

My fellow new-comers were perplexed; and one of them, a man who always made a point of resisting education, and who thought nothing of calling some of our instructor's best information "Tommy Rot!" said, "I don't see what can happen; we're right out at sea, and it's as calm as a millpond."

"Don't you, my young friend? don't you?" sadly said an old Coaster. "Well, I'll just tell you there's precious little that can't happen, for we're among the shoals of St. Ann."

The new-comers went on deck "just to look round;" and as there was nothing to be seen but a superb specimen of damp darkness, they returned to the saloon, one of them bearing an old chart sheet which he had borrowed from the authorities. Now that chart was not reassuring; the thing

looked like an exhibition pattern of a prize shot gun, with the quantity of rocks marked down on it.

"Look here," said an anxious inquirer; "why are some of these rocks named after the Company's ships?"

"Think," said the calm old Coaster.

"Oh, I say! hang it all, you don't mean to say they've been wrecked here? Anyhow, if they have they got off all right. How is it the 'Yoruba Rock' and the 'Gambia Rock?' The 'Yoruba' and the 'Gambia' are running now."

"Those," explains the old Coaster kindly, "were the old 'Yoruba' and 'Gambia.' The 'Bonny' that runs now isn't the old 'Bonny.' It's the way with most of them, isn't it?" he says, turning to a fellow old Coaster. "Naturally," says his friend. "But this is the old original, you know, and it's just about time she wrote up her name on one of these tombstones." "You don't save ships," he continues, for the instruction of the new-comers, attentive enough now; "that go on the Kru coast, and if you get ashore you don't save the things you stand up in—the natives strip you."

"Cannibals!" I suggest.

"Oh, of course they are cannibals; they are all cannibals, are natives down here when they get the chance. But, that does not matter; you see what I object to is being brought on board the next steamer that happens to call crowded with all sorts of people you know, and with a lady missionary or so among them, just with nothing on one but a flyaway native cloth. You remember D——?"

"Well," says his friend. Strengthened by this support, he takes his turn at instructing the young critic, saying soothingly, "there, don't you worry; have a good dinner." (It was just being laid.) "For if you do get ashore the food is

something beastly. But, after all, what with the sharks and the surf and the cannibals, you know the chances are a thousand to one that the worst will come to the worst and you live to miss your trousers."

After dinner we new-comers went on deck to keep an eye on Providence, and I was called on to explain how the alarm had been given me by the footgear of the officers. I said, like all great discoveries, "it was founded on observation made in a scientific spirit." I had noticed that whenever a particularly difficult bit of navigation had to be done on our boat, red velvet slippers were always worn, as for instance, when running through the heavy weather we had met south of the Bay, on going in at Puerto de la Luz, and on rounding the Almadia reefs, and on entering Freetown harbour in fog. But never before had I seen more than one officer wearing them at a time, while to-night they were blazing like danger signals at the shore ends of all three.

My opinion as to the importance of these articles to navigation became further strengthened by subsequent observations in the Bights of Biafra and Benin. We picked up rivers in them, always wore them when crossing bars, and did these things on the whole successfully. But once I was on a vessel that was rash enough to go into a difficult river—Rio del Rey—without their aid. That vessel got stuck fast on a bank, and, as likely as not, would be sticking there now with her crew and passengers mere mosquito-eaten skeletons, had not our First officer rushed to his cabin, put on red velvet slippers and gone out in a boat, energetically sounding around with a hand lead. Whereupon we got off, for clearly it was not by his sounding; it never amounted to more than two fathoms, while we required a good three-and-a-half. Yet that First officer, a truthful man, always,

said nobody did a stroke of work on board that vessel bar himself; so I must leave the reader to escape if he can from believing it was the red velvet slippers that saved us, merely remarking that these invaluable nautical instruments were to be purchased at Hamburg, and were possibly only met with on boats that run to Hamburg and used by veterans of that fleet.

If you will look on the map, not mine, but one visible to the naked eye, you will see that the Coast from Sierra Leone to Cape Palmas is the lower bend of the hump of Africa and the turning point into the Bights of Benin, Biafra and Panavia.

Its appearance gives the voyager his first sample of those stupendous sweeps of monotonous landscapes so characteristic of Africa. From Sherboro River to Cape Mount, viewed from the sea, every mile looks as like the next as peas in a pod, and should a cruel fate condemn you to live ashore here in a factory you get so used to the eternal sameness that you automatically believe that nothing else but this sort of world, past, present, or future, can ever have existed: and that cities and mountains are but the memories of dreams. A more horrible life than a life in such a region for a man who never takes to it, it is impossible to conceive; for a man who does take to it, it is a kind of dream life. I am judging from the few men I have met who have been here in the few isolated little factories that are Some of them look like haunted men, who, are among white men again, cling to their rs are lazy, dreamy men, rather bored by it. of country that produces this effect must be simple in make: it is not the mere isolation r white men that does it—for example, the

handful of men who are on the Ogowé do not get like this though many of them are equally lone men, yet they are bright and lively enough. Anyhow, exceedingly simple in make as is this region of Africa from Sherboro to Cape Mount, it consists of four different things in four long lines —lines that go away into eternity for as far as eye can see. There is the band of yellow sand on which your little factory is built. This band is walled to landwards by a wall of dark forest, mounted against the sky to seaward by a wall of white surf; beyond that there is the horizon-bounded ocean. Neither the forest wall nor surf wall changes enough to give any lively variety; they just run up and down a gamut of the same set of variations. In the light of brightest noon the forest wall stands dark against the dull blue sky, in the depth of the darkest night you can see it stand darker still, against the stars; on moonlight nights and on tornado nights, when you see the forest wall by the lightning light, it looks as if it had been done over with a coat of tar. The surf wall is equally consistent, it may be bad, or good as surf, but it's generally the former, which merely means it is a higher, broader wall, and more noisy, but it's the same sort of wall making the same sort of noise all the time. It is always white; in the sunlight, snowy white, suffused with a white mist wherein are little broken, quivering bits of rainbows. In the moonlight, it gleams with a whiteness there is in nothing else on earth. If you can imagine a non-transparent diamond wall, I think you will get some near idea to it, and even on the darkest of dark nights you can still see the surf wall clearly enough, for it shows like the ghost of its daylight self, seeming to have in it a light of its own, and you love or hate it. Night and day and season changes pass

over these things, like reflections in a mirror, without altering the mirror frame; but nothing comes that ever stills for one-half second the thunder of the surf-wall or makes it darker, or makes the forest-wall brighter than the rest of your world. Mind you, it is intensely beautiful, intensely soothing, intensely interesting if you can read it and you like it, but life for a man who cannot and does not is a living death.

But if you are seafaring there is no chance for a brooding melancholy to seize on you hereabouts, for you soon run along this bit of coast and see the sudden, beautiful headland of Cape Mount, which springs aloft in several rounded hills a thousand and odd feet above the sea and looking like an island. After passing it, the land rapidly sinks again to the old level, for a stretch of another 46 miles or so when Cape Mesurado,[1] rising about 200 feet, seems from seaward to be another island.

The capital of the Liberian Republic, Monrovia, is situated on the southern side of the river Mesurado, and right under the high land of the Cape, but it is not visible from the roadstead, and then again comes the low coast, unrolling its ribbon of sandy beach, walled as before with forest wall and surf, but with the difference that between the sand beach and the forest are long stretches of lagooned waters. Evil looking, mud-fringed things, when I once saw them at the end of a hard, dry season, but when the wet season's rains come they are transformed into beautiful lakes; communicating with each other and overflowing by shallow

[1] The derivation of this name given by Barbot is from *misericordia*. "As some pretend on occasion of a Portuguese ship cast away near the little river Druro, the men of that ship were assaulted by the negroes, which made the Portuguese cry for quarter, using the word *misericordia*, from which by corruption mesurado."

channels which they cut here and there through the sand-beach ramparts into the sea.

The identification of places from aboard ship along such a coast as this is very difficult. Even good sized rivers doubling on themselves sneak out between sand banks, and make no obvious break in surf or forest wall. The old sailing direction that gave as a landmark the "Tree with two crows on it" is as helpful as any one could get of many places here, and when either the smoke season or the wet season is on of course you cannot get as good as that. But don't imagine that unless the navigator wants to call on business, he can "just put up his heels and blissfully think o' nowt," for this bit of the West Coast of Africa is one of the most trying in the world to work. Monotonous as it is ashore, it is exciting enough out to sea in the way of the rocks and shoals, and an added danger exists at the beginning and end of the wet, and the beginning of the dry, in the shape of tornadoes.[1] These are sudden storms coming up usually with terrific violence; customarily from the S.E. and E., but sometimes towards the end of the season straight from S. More slave ships than enough have been lost along this bit of coast in their time, let alone decent Bristol Guineamen into the bargain, owing to "a delusion that occasionally seized inexperienced commanders that it was well to heave-to for a tornado, whereas a sailing ship's best chance lay in her heels." It was a good chance too, for owing to the short duration of this breed of hurricane and their terrific rain, there accompanies them no heavy sea,

[1] Tornado is possibly a corruption from the Portuguese *trovado*, a thunderstorm; or from *tornado*, signifying returned; but most likely it comes from the Spanish *torneado*, signifying thunder.

the tornado-rain ironing the ocean down; so if, according to one of my eighteenth century friends, you see that well-known tornado-cloud arch coming, and you are on a Guineaman, for your sins, "a dray of a vessel with an Epping Forest of sea growth on her keel, and two-thirds of the crew down with fever or dead of it, as likely they will be after a spell on this coast," the sooner you get her ready to run the better, and with as little on her as you can do with. If, however, there be a white cloud inside the cloud-arch you must strip her quick and clean, for that tornado is going to be the worst tornado you were ever in.

Nevertheless, tornadoes are nothing to the rocks round here. At the worst, there are but two tornadoes a day, always at tide turn, only at certain seasons of the year, and you can always see them coming; but it is not that way with the rocks. There is at least one to each quarter hour in the entire twenty-four. They are there all the year round, and more than one time in forty you can't see them coming. In case you think I am overstating the case, I beg to lay before you the statement concerning rocks given me by an old captain, who was used to these seas and never lost a ship. I had said something flippant about rocks, and he said, "I'll write them down for you, missy." This is just his statement for the chief rocks between Junk River and Baffu; not a day's steamer run. "Two and three quarters miles and six cables N.W. by W. from Junk River there is 'Hooper's Patch,' irregular in shape, about a mile long and carrying in some places only 2½ fathoms of water. There is another bad patch about a mile and a-half from Hooper's, so if you have to go dodging your way into Marshall, a Liberian settlement, great caution and good luck is useful. In Waterhouse Bay there's a cluster of pinnacle

rocks all under water, with a will-o'-the wisp kind of buoy, that may be there or not to advertise them. One rock at Tobokanni has the civility to show its head above water, and a chum of his, that lies about a mile W. by S. from Tobokanni Point, has the seas constantly breaking on it. The coast there is practically reefed for the next eight miles, with a boat channel near the shore. But there is a gap in this reef at Young Sesters, through which, if you handle her neatly, you can run a ship in. In some places this reef of rock is three-quarters of a mile out to sea. Trade Town is the next place where you may now call for cargo. Its particular rock lies a mile out and shows well with the sea breaking on it. After Trade Town the rocks are more scattered, and the bit of coast by Kurrau River rises in cliffs 40 to 60 feet high. The sand at their base is strewn with fallen blocks on which the surf breaks with great force, sending the spray up in columns; and until you come to Sestos River the rocks are innumerable, but not far out to sea, so you can keep outside them unless you want to run in to the little factory at Tembo. Just beyond Sestos River, three-quarters of a mile S.S.W. of Fen River, there are those Fen rocks on which the sea breaks, but between these and the Manna rocks, which are a little more than a mile from shore N.W. by N. from Sestos River, there are any quantity of rocks marked and not marked on the chart. These Manna rocks are a jolly bad lot, black, and only a few breaking, and there is a shoal bank to the S.E. of these for half a mile, then for the next four miles, there are not more than 70 hull openers to the acre. Most of them are not down on the chart, so there's plenty of opportunity now about for you to do a little African discovery until you come to Sestos reef, off a point of the same name, projecting half a mile to westwards

with a lot of foul ground round it. Spence rock which breaks, is W. two-thirds S., distant 1¼ miles from Sestos Point; within 5 miles of it is the rock which *The Corisco* discovered in 1885. It is not down on the chart yet, all these set of rocks round Sestos are sharp too, so the lead gives you no warning, and you are safer right-away from them. Then there's a very nasty one called Diabolitos, I expect those old Portuguese found it out, it's got a lot of little ones which extend 2 miles and more to seaward. There is another devil rock off Bruni, called by the natives Ba Ya. It stands 60 feet above sea-level, and has a towering crown of trees on it. It is a bad one is this, for in thick weather, as it is a mile off shore and isolated, it is easily mistaken, and so acts as a sort of decoy for the lot of sunken devil rocks which are round it. Further along towards Baffu there are four more rocks a mile out, and forest ground on the way."

I just give you this bit of information as an example, because I happen to have this rough rock list of it; but a little to the east the rocks and dangers of the Kru Coast are quite as bad, both in quantity and quality, indeed, more so, for there is more need for vessels to call. I often think of this bit of coast when I see people unacquainted with the little local peculiarities of dear West Africa looking at a map thereof and wondering why such and such a Bay is not utilised as a harbour, or such and such a river not navigated, or this, that and the other bit of Coast so little known of and traded with. Such undeveloped regions have generally excellent local reasons, reasons that cast no blame on white man's enterprise or black man's savagery. They are rock-reefed coast or barred rivers, and therefore not worth the expense to the trader of

working them, and you must always remember that unless the trader opens up bits of West Africa no one else will. It may seem strange to the landsman that the navigator should hug such a coast as the shoals (the *Bainos* as the old Portuguese have it) of St. Ann—but they do. If you ask a modern steamboat captain he will usually tell you it is to save time, a statement that the majority of the passengers on a West Coast boat will receive with open derision and contempt, holding him to be a spendthrift thereof; but I myself fancy that hugging this coast is a vestigial idea. In the old sailing-ship days, if you ran out to sea far from these shoals you lost your wind, and maybe it would take you five mortal weeks to go from Sierra Leone to Cape Mount or *Wask Congo*, as the natives called it in the 17th century.

Off the Kru Coast, both West Coast and South-West Coast steamers and men-o'-war on this station, call to ship or unship Krumen. The character of the rocks, of which I have spoken,—their being submerged for the most part, and pinnacles—increases the danger considerably, for a ship may tear a wound in herself that will make short work of her, yet unless she remains impaled on the rock, making, as it were, a buoy of herself, that rock might not be found again for years.

This sort of thing has happened many times, and the surveying vessels, who have been instructed to localise the danger and get it down on the chart, have failed to do so in spite of their most elaborate efforts; whereby the more uncharitable of the surveying officers are led in their wrath to hold that the mercantile marine officers who reported that rock and gave its bearings did so under the influence of drink, while the more charitable and scientifically inclined have suggested that elevation and sub-

sidence are energetically and continually at work along the Bight of Benin, hoisting up shoals to within a few feet of the surface in some places and withdrawing them in others to a greater depth.

The people ashore here are commonly spoken of as Liberians and Kruboys. The Liberians are colonists in the country, having acquired settlements on this coast by purchase from the chiefs of the native tribes. The idea of restoring the Africans carried off by the slave trade to Africa occurred to America before it did to England, for it was warmly advocated by the Rev. Samuel Hoskins, of Newport, Rhode Island, in 1770, but it was 1816 before America commenced to act on it, and the first emigrants embarked from New York for Liberia in 1820. On the other hand, though England did not get the idea until 1787, she took action at once, buying from King Tom, through the St George's Bay Company, the land at Sierra Leone between the Rochelle and Kitu River. This was done on the recommendation of Mr. Smeatham. The same year was shipped off to this new colony the first consignment of 460 free negro servants and 60 whites; out of those 400 arrived and survived their first fortnight, and set themselves to build a town called Granville, after Mr. Granville Sharpe, whose exertions had resulted in Lord Mansfield's epoch-making decision in the case of Somerset *v.* Mr. J. G. Stewart, his master, *i.e.*, that no slave could be held on English soil.

The Liberians were differently situated from their neighbours at Sierra Leone in many ways; in some of these they have been given a better chance than the Africans sent to Sierra Leone—in other ways not so good a chance. Neither of the colonies has been completely successful.

I hold the opinion that if those American and English philanthropists could not have managed the affair better than they did, they had better have confined their attention to talking, a thing they were naturally great on, and left the so-called restoration of the African to his native soil alone. For they made a direful mess of the affair from a practical standpoint, and thereby inflicted an enormous amount of suffering and a terrible mortality on the Africans they shipped from England, Canada, and America; the tradition whereof still clings to the colonies of Liberia and Sierra Leone, and gravely hinders their development by the emigration of educated, or at any rate civilised, Africans now living in the West Indies and the Southern States of America.

I am aware that there are many who advocate the return to Africa of the Africans who were exported from the West Coast during the slavery days. But I cannot regard this as a good or even necessary policy, for two reasons. One is that those Africans were not wanted in West Africa. The local supply of African is sufficient to develop the country in every way. There are in West Africa now, Africans thoroughly well educated, as far as European education goes, and who are quite conversant with the nature of their own country and with the language of their fellow-countrymen. There are also any quantity of Africans there who, though not well educated, are yet past-masters in the particular culture which West Africa has produced on its inhabitants.

The second reason is that the descendants of the exported Africans have seemingly lost their power of resistance to the malarial West Coast climate. This a most interesting subject, which some scientific gentleman

ought to attend to, for there is a sufficient quantity of evidence ready for his investigation. The mortality among the Africans sent to Sierra Leone and Liberia has been excessive, and so also has been that amongst the West Indians who went to Congo Belge, while the original intention of the United Presbyterian Mission to Calabar had to be abandoned from the same cause. In fact it looks as if the second and third generation of deported Africans had no greater power of resistance to West Africa than the pure white races; and, such being the case, it seems to me a pity they should go there. They would do better to bring their energies to bear on developing the tropical regions of America and leave the undisturbed stock of Africa to develop its own.

However, we will not go into that now. I beg to refer you to Bishop Ingram's *Sierra Leone after a Hundred Years*, for the history of England's philanthropic efforts. I may some day, perhaps, in the remote future, write myself a book on America's effort, but I cannot write it now, because I have in my possession only printed matter —a wilderness of opinion and a mass of abuse on Liberia as it is. No sane student of West Africa would proceed to form an opinion on any part of it with such stuff and without a careful personal study of the thing as it is.

The natives of this part of the West coast, the aboriginal ones, as Mrs. Gault would call them, are a different matter. You can go and live in West Africa without seeing a crocodile or a hippopotamus or a mountain, but no white man can go there without seeing and experiencing a Kruboy, and Kruboys are one of the main tribes here. Kruboys are, indeed, the backbone of white effort in West Africa, and

I think I may say there is but one man of all of us who have visited West Africa who has not paid a tribute to the Kruboy's sterling qualities. Alas! that one was one of England's greatest men. Why he painted that untrue picture of them I do not know. I know that on this account the magnificent work he did is discredited by all West Coasters. "If he said that of Kruboys," say the old coasters, "how can he have known or understood anything?" It is a painful subject, and my opinion on Kruboys is entirely with the old coasters, who know them with an experience of years, not with the experience of any man, however eminent, who only had the chance of seeing them for a few weeks, and whose information was so clearly drawn from vitiated sources. All I can say in defence of my great fellow countryman is that he came to West Africa from the very worst school a man can for understanding the Kruboy, or any true Negro, namely, from the Bantu African tribes, and that he only fell into the error many other great countrymen of mine have since fallen into, whereby there is war and misunderstanding and disaffection between our Government and the true Negro to-day, and nothing, as far as one can see, but a grievous waste of life and gold ahead.

The Kruboy is indeed a sore question to all old coasters. They have devoted themselves to us English, and they have suffered, laboured, fought, been massacred, and so on with us for generation after generation. Many a time Krumen have come to me when we have been together in foreign possessions and said, "Help us, we are Englishmen." They have never asked in vain of me or any Englishman in West Africa, but recognition of their services by our Government at home is—well, about as much recognition as most men get from it who do good work in

West Africa. For such men are a mere handful whom Imperialism can neglect with impunity, and, even if it has for the moment to excuse itself for so doing, it need only call us "traders." I say us, because I am vain of having been, since my return, classed among the Liverpool traders by a distinguished officer.

This part of Western Africa from Sierra Leone to Cape Palmas was known to the geographers amongst the classics as *Leuce Æthiopia*: to their successors as the Grain or Pepper or Meleguetta Coast. I will discourse later of the inhabitants, the Kru, from an ethnological standpoint, because they are too interesting and important to be got in here. The true limits of the Grain coast are from the River Sestros to Growy, two leagues east of Cape Palmas according to Barbot, and its name came from the fact that it was hereabouts that the Portuguese, on their early expeditions in the 15th century, first came across grains of paradise, a circumstance that much excited those navigators at the time and encouraged them to pursue their expeditions to this region, for grains of paradise were in those days much valued and had been long known in European markets.

These euphoniously-named spices are the seeds of divers amomums, or in lay language, cardamum—*Amomum Meleguetta* (Roscoe) or as Pereira has it, *Amomum granum Paradisi*. Their more decorative appellation "grains of Paradise" is of Italian origin, the Italians having known and valued this spice, bought it, and sold it to the rest of Europe at awful prices long before the Portuguese, under Henry the Navigator, visited the West African Coast. The Italians had bought the spice from the tawny Moors, who brought it, with other products of West Africa across

the desert to the Mediterranean port Monte Barca by Tripoli.

The reason why this African cardamum received either the name of grains of Paradise or of Meleguetta pepper is, like most African things, wrapt in mystery to a certain extent. Some authorities hold they got the first name on their own merits. Others that the Italian merchants gave it them to improve prices. Others that the Italians gave it them honestly enough on account of their being nice, and no one knowing where on earth exactly they came from, said, therefore, why not say Paradise? It is certain, however, that before the Portuguese went down into the unknown seas and found the Pepper coast that the Italians knew those peppers came from the country of Melli, but as they did not know where that was, beyond that it was somewhere in Africa, this did not take away the sense of romance from the spice.

As for their name Meleguetta, an equal divergence of opinion reigns. I myself think the proper word is meneguetta. The old French name was maneguilia, and the name they are still called by at Cape Palmas in the native tongue is Emanequetta. The French claim to have brought peppers and ivory from the River Sestros as early as 1364, and the River Sestros was on the seaboard of the kingdom of Mene, but the termination quetta is most probably a corruption of the Portuguese name for pepper. But, on the other hand, the native name for them among the Sestros people is Waizanzag. And therefore, the whole name may well be European, and just as well called meleguetta as meneguetta, because the kingdom of Mene was a fief of the Empire of Melli when the Portuguese first called at Sestros. The other possible derivation is that which says mele is a corrup-

tion of the Italian name for Turkey millet, *Melanga*, a thing the grains rather resemble. Another very plausible derivation is that the whole word is Portuguese in origin, but a corruption of *mala gens*, the Portuguese having found the people they first bought them of a bad lot, and so named the pepper in memory thereof. This however is interestingly erroneous and an early example of the danger of armchairism when dealing with West Africa. For the coast of the *malegens* was not the coast the Portuguese first got the pepper from, but it was that coast just to the east of the Meleguetta, where all they got was killing and general unpleasantness round by the Rio San Andrew, Drewin way, which coast is now included in the Ivory.

The grains themselves are by no means confined to the Grain Coast, but are the fruit of a plant common in all West African districts, particularly so on Cameroon Mountain, where just above the 3,000 feet level on the east and south-east face you come into a belt of them, and horrid walking ground they make. I have met with them also in great profusion in the Sierra del Crystal; but there is considerable difference in the kinds. The grain of Paradise of commerce is, like that of the East Indian cardamom, enclosed in a fibrous capsule, and the numerous grains in it are surrounded by a pulp having a most pleasant, astringent, aromatic taste. This is pleasant eating, particularly if you do not manage to chew up with it any of the grains, for they are amazingly hot in the mouth, and cause one to wonder why Paradise instead of Hades was reported as their "country of origin."

The natives are very fond of chewing the capsule and the inner bark of the stem of the plant. They are, for the

matter of that, fond of chewing anything, but the practice in this case seems to me more repaying than when carried on with kola or ordinary twigs.

Two kinds of meleguetta pepper come up from Guinea. That from Accra is the larger, plumper, and tougher skinned, and commands the higher price. The capsule, which is about 2 inches long by 1 inch in breadth, is more oval than that of the other kind, and the grains in it are round and bluntly angular, bright brown outside, but when broken open showing a white inside. The other kind, the ordinary Guinea grain of commerce, comes from Sierra Leone and Liberia. They are devoid of the projecting tuft on the umbilicus. The capsule is like that of the Accra grain. When dry, it is wrinkled, and if soaked does not display the longitudinal frill of the Javan *Amomum maximum*, which it is sometimes used to adulterate. This common capsule is only about 1½ inches long and ½ an inch in diameter, but the grain when broken open is also white like the Accra one. There are, however, any quantity on Cameroons of the winged Javan variety, but these have so far not been exported.

The plants that produce the grains are zingiberaceous, cane-like in appearance, only having broader, blunter leaves than the bamboo. The flower is very pretty, in some kinds a violet pink, but in the most common a violet purple, and they are worn as marks of submission by people in the Oil Rivers suing for peace. These flowers, which grow close to the ground, seeming to belong more to the root of the plant than the stem, or, more properly speaking, looking as if they had nothing to do with the graceful great soft canes round them, but were a crop of lovely crocus-like flowers on their own account, are followed by crimson-

skinned pods enclosing the black and brown seeds wrapped in juicy pulp, quite unlike the appearance they present when dried or withered.

There is only a small trade done in Guinea grains now, George III. (Cap. 58) having declared that no brewer or dealer in wine shall be found in possession of grains of Paradise without paying a fine of £200, and that if any druggist shall sell them to a brewer that druggist shall pay a fine of £500 for each such offence.

The reason of this enactment was the idea that the grains were poisonous, and that the brewers in using them to give fire to their liquors were destroying their consumers, His Majesty's lieges. As far as poison goes this idea was wrong, for Meleguetta pepper or grains of Paradise are quite harmless though hot. Perhaps, however, some consignment may have reached Europe with poisonous seeds in it. I once saw four entirely different sorts of seeds in a single sample. That is the worst of our Ethiopian friends, they adulterate every mortal thing that passes through their hands. I will do them the justice to say they usually do so with the intellectually comprehensible end in view of gaining an equivalent pecuniary advantage by it. Still it is commercially unsound of them ; for example for years they sent up the seeds of the *Kickia Africana* as an adulteration for *Strophantus*, whereas they would have made more by finding out that the *Kickia* was a great rubber-producing tree. They will often take as much trouble to put in foreign matter as to get more legitimate raw material. I really fancy if any one were to open up a trade in Kru Coast rocks, adulteration would be found in the third shipment. It is their way, and legislation is useless. All that is necessary is that the traders who buy of them should know their business

and not make infants of themselves by regarding the African as one or expecting the government to dry nurse them.

In private life the native uses and values these Guinea grains highly, using them sometimes internally sometimes externally, pounding them up into a paste with which they beplaster their bodies for various aches and pains. For headache, not the sequelæ of trade gin, but of malaria, the forehead and temples are plastered with a stiff paste made of Guinea grain, hard oil, chalk, or some such suitable medium, and it is a most efficacious treatment for this fearfully common complaint in West Africa. But the careful ethnologist must not mix this medicinal plaster up with the sort of prayerful plaster worn by the West Africans at time for Ju Ju, and go and mistake a person who is merely attending to his body for one who is attending to his soul.

CHAPTER III

AFRICAN CHARACTERISTICS

Containing some account of the divers noises of Western Afrik and an account of the country east of Cape Palmas, and other things ; to which is added an account of the manner of shipping timber ; of the old Bristol trade; and, mercifully for the reader, a leaving off.

WHEN we got our complement of Krumen on board, we proceeded down Coast with the intention of calling off Accra. I will spare you the description of the scenes which accompany the taking on of Kruboys ; they have frequently been described, for they always alarm the new-comer—they are the first bit of real Africa he sees if bound for the Gold Coast or beyond. Sierra Leone, charming, as it is, has a sort of Christy Minstrel air about it for which he is prepared, but the Kruboy as he comes on board looks quite the Boys' Book of Africa sort of thing ; though, needless to remark, as innocent as a lamb, bar a tendency to acquire portable property. Nevertheless, Kruboys coming on board for your first time alarm you ; at any rate they did me, and they also introduced me to African noise, which like the insects is another most excellent thing, that you should get broken into early.

Woe ! to the man in Africa who cannot stand perpetual uproar. Few things surprised me more than the rarity of silence and the intensity of it when you did get it. There

FOR PALM WINE.

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is only that time which comes between 10.30 A.M. and 4.30 P.M., in which you can look for anything like the usual quiet of an English village. We will give Man the first place in the orchestra, he deserves it. I fancy the main body of the lower classes of Africa think externally instead of internally. You will hear them when they are engaged together on some job—each man issuing the fullest directions and prophecies concerning it, in shouts; no one taking the least notice of his neighbours. If the head man really wants them to do something definite he fetches those within his reach an introductory whack; and even when you are sitting alone in the forest you will hear a man or woman coming down the narrow bush path chattering away with such energy and expression that you can hardly believe your eyes when you learn from them that he has no companion.

Some of this talking is, I fancy, an equivalent to our writing. I know many English people who, if they want to gather a clear conception of an affair write it down; the African not having writing, first talks it out. And again more of it is conversation with spirit guardians and familiar spirits, and also with those of their dead relatives and friends, and I have often seen a man, sitting at a bush fire or in a village palaver house, turn round and say, "You remember that, mother?" to the ghost that to him was there.

I remember mentioning this very touching habit of theirs, as it seemed to me, in order to console a sick and irritable friend whose cabin was close to a gangway then in possession of a very lively lot of Sierra Leone Kruboys, and he said, "Oh, I daresay they do, Miss Kingsley; but I'll be hanged if Hell is such a damned way off West Africa that they need shout so loud."

The calm of the hot noontide fades towards evening time, and the noise of things in general revives and increases. Then do the natives call in instrumental aid of diverse and to my ear pleasant kinds. Great is the value of the tom-tom, whether it be of pure native origin or constructed from an old Devos patent paraffin oil tin. Then there is the kitty-katty, so called from its strange scratching-vibrating sound, which you hear down South, and on Fernando Po, of the excruciating mouth harp, and so on, all accompanied by the voice.

If it be play night, you become the auditor to an orchestra as strange and varied as that which played before Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego. I know I am no musician, so I own to loving African music, bar that Fernandian harp! Like Benedick, I can say, "Give me a horn for my money when all is done," unless it be a tom-tom. The African horn, usually made of a tooth of ivory, and blown from a hole in the side, is an instrument I unfortunately cannot play on. I have not the lung capacity. It requires of you to breathe in at one breath a whole S.W. gale of wind and then to empty it into the horn, which responds with a preliminary root-too-toot before it goes off into its noble dirge bellow. It is a fine instrument and should be introduced into European orchestras, for it is full of colour. But I think that even the horn, and certainly all other instruments, savage and civilised, should bow their heads in homage to the tom-tom, for, as a method of getting at the inner soul of humanity where are they compared with that noble instrument! You doubt it. Well go and hear a military tattoo or any performance on kettle drums up here and I feel you will reconsider the affair; but even then, remember you have not heard all the African tom-

tom can tell you. I don't say it's an instrument suited for serenading your lady-love with, but that is a thing I don't require of an instrument. All else the tom-tom can do, and do well. It can talk as well as the human tongue. It can make you want to dance or fight for no private reason, as nothing else can, and be you black or white it calls up in you all your Neolithic man.

Many African instruments are, however, sweet and gentle, and as mild as sucking doves, notably the xylophonic family. These marimbas, to use their most common name, are all over Africa from Senegal to Zambesi. Their form varies with various tribes—the West African varieties almost universally have wooden keys instead of iron ones like the East African. Personally, I like the West African best; there is something exquisite in the sweet, clear, water-like notes produced from the strips of soft wood of graduated length that make the West African keyboard. All these instruments have the sound magnified and enriched by a hollow wooden chamber under their keyboard. In Calabar this chamber is one small shallow box, ornamented, as most wooden things are in Calabar, with poker work—but in among the Fan, under the keyboard were a set of calabashes, and in the calabashes one hole apiece and that hole covered carefully with the skin of a large spider. While down in Angola you met the xylophone in the imposing form you can see in the frontispiece to this volume. Of the orchid fibre-stringed harp, I have spoken elsewhere, and there remains but one more truly great instrument that I need mention. I have had a trial at playing every African instrument I have come across, under native teachers, and they have assured me that, with application, I should

succeed in becoming a rather decent performer on the harp and xylophone, and had the makings of a genius for the tom-tom, but my greatest and most rapid triumph was achieved on this other instrument. I picked up the hang of the thing in about five minutes, and then, being vain, when I returned to white society I naturally desired to show off my accomplishment, but met with no encouragement whatsoever—indeed my friends said gently, but firmly, that if I did it again they should leave, not the settlement merely, but the continent, and devote their remaining years to sweeping crossings in their native northern towns—they said they would rather do this than hear that instrument played again by any one.

This instrument is made from an old powder keg, with both ends removed; a piece of raw hide is tied tightly round it over what one might call a bung-hole, while a piece of wood with a lump of rubber or fastening is passed through this hole. The performer then wets his hand, inserts it into the instrument, and lightly grasps the stick and works it up and down for all he is worth; the knob beats the drum skin with a beautiful boom, and the stick gives an exquisite screech as it passes through the hole in the skin which the performer enhances with an occasional howl or wail of his own, according to his taste or feeling. There are other varieties of this instrument, some with one end of the cylinder covered over and the knob of the stick beating the inside, but in all its forms it is impressive.

Next in point of strength to the human vocal and instrumental performers come frogs. The small green one, whose note is like that of the cricket's magnified, is a part-singer, but the big bull frog, whose tones are all his own, sings in Handel Festival sized choruses. I don't much mind

either of these, but the one I hate is a solo frog who seems eternally engaged at night in winding up a Waterbury watch. Many a night have I stocked thick with calamity on that frog's account; many a night have I landed myself in hailing distance of Amen Corner from having gone out of hut, or house, with my mind too full of the intention of flattening him out with a slipper, to think of driver ants, leopards, or snakes. Frog hunting is one of the worst things you can do in West Africa.

Next to frogs come the crickets with their chorus of "she did, she didn't," and the cicadas, but they knock off earlier than frogs, and when the frogs have done for the night there is quiet for the few hours of cool, until it gets too cool and the chill that comes before the dawn wakes up the birds, and they wake you with their long, mellow, exquisitely beautiful whistles.

The aforesaid are everyday noises in West Africa, and you soon get used to them or die of them; but there are myriads of others that you hear when in the bush. The grunting sigh of relief of the hippos, the strange groaning, whining bark of the crocodiles, the thin cry of the bats, the cough of the leopards, and that unearthly yell that sometimes comes out of the forest in the depths of dark nights. Yes, my naturalist friends, it's all very well to say it is only a love-lorn, innocent little marmoset-kind of thing that makes it. I know, poor dear, Softly, Softly, and he wouldn't do it. Anyhow, you just wait until you hear it in a shaky little native hut, or when you are spending the night, having been fool enough to lose yourself, with your back against a tree quite alone and that yell comes at you with its agony of anguish and appeal out of that dense black world of forest which the moon, be she never so strong, can-

not enlighten, and which looks all the darker for the contrast of the glistening silver mist that shows here and there in the clearings, or over lagoon, or river, wavering twining, rising and falling; so full of strange motion and beauty, yet, somehow, as sinister in its way as the rest of your surroundings, and so deadly silent. I think if you hear that yell cutting through this sort of thing like a knife and sinking despairingly into the surrounding silence, you will agree with me that it seems to favour Duppy, and that, perchance, the strange red patch of ground you passed at the foot of the cotton tree before night came down on you, was where the yell came from, for it is red and damp and your native friends have told you it is so because of the blood whipped off a sasa-bonsum and his victims as he goes down through it to his under-world home.

Seen from the sea, the Ivory Coast is a relief to the eye after the dead level of the Grain Coast, but the attention of the mariner to rocks has no practical surcease; and there is that submarine horror for sailing ships, the Bottomless pit. They used to have great tragedies with it in olden times, and you can still, if you like, for that matter; but the French having a station 15 miles to the east of it at Grand Bassam would nowadays prevent your experiencing the action of this phenomenon thoroughly, and getting not only wrecked but killed by the natives ashore, though they are a lively lot still.

Now although this is not a manual of devotion, I must say a few words on the Bottomless pit. All along the West Coast of Africa there is a great shelving bank, submarine, formed by the deposit of the great mud-laden rivers and the earth-wash of the heavy rains. The slope of what the scientific term the great West African bank is, on the whole,

SECRET SOCIETY LEAVING THE SACRED GROVE

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JENGU DEVIL DANCE OF KING WILLIAM'S SLAVES, SETTE CAMMA, NOV. 9, 1888.

very regular, except opposite Piccaninny Bassam, where it is cut right through by a great chasm, presumably the result of volcanic action. This chasm commences about 15 miles from land and is shaped like a V, with the narrow end shorewards. Nine miles out it is three miles wider and 2,400 feet deep, at three miles out the sides are opposite each other and there is little more than a mile between them, and the depth is 1,536 feet; at one mile from the beach the chasm is only a quarter of a mile wide and the depth 600 feet—close up beside the beach the depth is 120 feet. The floor of this chasm is covered with grey mud, and some five miles out the surveying vessels got fragments of coral rock.

The sides of this submarine valley seem almost vertical cliffs, and herein lies its danger for the sailing ship. The master thereof, in the smoke or fog season (December—February), may not exactly know to a mile or so where he is, and being unable to make out Piccaninny Bassam, which is only a small native village on the sand ridge between the surf and the lagoon, he lets go his anchor on the edge of the cliffs of this Bottomless pit. Then the set of the tide and the onshore breeze cause it to drag a little, and over it goes down into the abyss, and ashore he is bound to go. In old days he and his ship's crew formed a welcome change in the limited dietary of the exultant native. Mr. Barbot, who knew them well, feelingly remarks, "it is from the bloody tempers of these brutes that the Portuguese gave them the name of Malagens for they eat human flesh," and he cites how "recently they have massacred a great number of Portuguese, Dutch and English, who came for provisions and water, not thinking of any treachery, and not many years since, (that is to say,

in 1677) an English ship lost three of its men; a Hollander fourteen; and, in 1678, a Portuguese, nine, of whom nothing was ever heard since."

From Cape Palmas until you are past the mouth of the Taka River (St. Andrew) the coast is low. Then comes the Cape of the Little Strand (Caboda Prazuba), now called, I think, Price's Point. To the east of this you will see ranges of dwarf red cliffs rising above the beach and gradually increasing in height until they attain their greatest in the face of Mount Bedford, where the cliff is 280 feet high. The Portuguese called these Barreira Vermelhas; the French, Kalazis Rouges; and the Dutch, Roode Kliftin, all meaning Red Cliffs. The sand at their feet is strewn with boulders, and the whole country round here looks fascinating and interesting. I regret never having had an opportunity of seeing whether those cliffs had fossils on them, for they seem to me so like those beloved red cliffs of mine in Kacongo which have. The investigation, however, of such makes of Africa is messy. Those Kacongo cliffs were of a sort of red clay that took on a greasy slipperiness when they were wet, which they frequently were on account of the little springs of water that came through their faces. When pottering about them, after having had my suspicions lulled by twenty or thirty yards of crumbly dryness, I would ever and anon come across a water spring, and down I used to go—and lose nothing by it, going home in the evening time in what the local natives would have regarded as deep mourning for a large family—red clay being their sign thereof. The fossils I found in them were horizontally deposed layers of clam shells with regular intervals, or bands, of red clay, four or five feet across; between the layers some of the shell

layers were 40 or more feet above the present beach level. Identical deposits of shell I also found far inland in Ka Congo, but that has nothing to do with the Ivory Coast.

Inland, near Drewin, on the Ivory Coast, you can see from the sea curious shaped low hills; the definite range of these near Drewin is called the Highland of Drewin; after this place they occur frequently close to the shore, usually isolated but now and again two or three together, like those called by sailors the Sisters. I am much interested in these peculiar-shaped hills that you see on the Ivory and Gold Coast, and again, far away down South, rising out of the Ouronuogou swamp, and have endeavoured to find out if any theories have been suggested as to their formation, but in vain. They look like great bubbles, and run from 300 to 2,000 feet.

The red cliffs end at Mount Bedford and the estuary of the Fresco River, and after passing this the coast is low until you reach what is now called the district of Lahu, a native sounding name, but really a corruption from its old French name La-Hoe or Hou.

You would not think, when looking at this bit of coast from the sea, that the strip of substantial brown sand beach is but a sort of viaduct, behind which lies a chain of stagnant lagoons. In the wet season, these stretches of dead water cut off the sand beach from the forest for as much as 40 miles and more.

Beyond Mount La-Hou on this sand strip there are many native villages—each village a crowded clump of huts, surrounded by a grove of coco palm trees, each tree belonging definitely to some native family or individual, and having its owner's particular mark on it, and each grove of palm trees slanting uniformly at a stiff angle, which gives

you no cause to ask which is the prevailing wind here, for they tell you bright and clear, as they lean N.E., that the S.W. wind brought them up to do so.

Groves of coco palms are no favourites of mine. I don't like them. The trees are nice enough to look on, and nice enough to use in the divers ways you can use a coco-nut palm ; but the noise of the breeze in their crowns keeps up a perpetual rattle with their hard leaves that sounds like heavy rain day and night, so that you feel you ought to live under an umbrella, and your mind gets worried about it when you are not looking after it with your common sense.

Then the natives are such a nuisance with coco-nuts. For a truly terrific kniff give me even in West Africa a sand beach with coco-nut palms and natives. You never get coco-nut palms without natives, because they won't grow out of sight of human habitation. I am told also that one coco will not grow alone ; it must have another coco as well as human neighbours, so these things, of course, end in a grove. It's like keeping cats with no one to drown the kittens.

Well, the way the smell comes about in this affair is thus. The natives bury the coco-nuts in the sand, so as to get the fibre off them. They have buried nuts in that sand for ages before you arrive, and the nuts have rotted, and crabs have come to see what was going on, a thing crabs will do, and they have settled down here and died in their generations, and rotted too. The sandflies and all manner of creeping things have found that sort of district suits them, and have joined in, and the natives, who are great hands at fishing, have flung all the fish offal there, and there is usually a lagoon behind this sort of thing which contributes

its particular aroma, and so between them the smell is a good one, even for West Africa.

The ancient geographers called this coast Ajanginal Æthiope, and the Dutch and French used to reckon it from Growe, where the Melaguetta Coast ends. Just east of Cape Palmas, to the Rio do Sweiro da Costa, where they counted the Gold Coast to begin, the Portuguese divided the coast thus. The Ivory, or, as the Dutchmen called it, the Tand Kust, from Gowe to Rio St. Andrew; the Malaguetta from St. Andrew to the Rio Lagos;[1] and the Quaqua from the Rio Lagos to Rio de Sweiro da Costa, which is just to the east of what is now called Assini.

It is undoubtedly one of the most interesting and nowadays least known bits of the coast of the Bight of Benin; but, taken altogether, with my small knowledge of it, I do not feel justified in recommending the Ivory Coast as either a sphere for emigration or a pleasure resort. Nevertheless, it is a very rich district naturally, and one of the most amusing features of West African trade you can see on a steamboat is to watch the shipping of timber therefrom.

This region of the Bight of Benin is one of enormous timber wealth, and the development of this of late years has been great, adding the name of Timber Ports to the many other names this particular bit of West Africa bears, the Timber Ports being the main ports of the French Ivory Coast, and the English port of Axim on the Gold Coast.

The best way to watch the working of this industry is to stay on board the steamer; if by chance you go on shore when this shipping of mahogany is going on you may be expected to help, or get out of the way, which is hot work, or difficult. The last time I was in Africa we on the ——

[1] No connection with the Colony of Lagos.

shipped 170 enormous bulks of timber. These logs run on an average 20 to 30 feet long and 3 to 4 feet in diameter. They are towed from the beach to the vessel behind the surf boats, seven and eight at a time, tied together by a rope running through rings called dogs, which are driven into the end of each log, and when alongside, the rope from the donkey engine crane is dropped overboard, and passed round the log by the negroes swimming about in the water regardless of sharks and as agile as fish. Then, with much uproar and advice, the huge logs are slowly heaved on board, and either deposited on the deck or forthwith swung over the hatch and lowered down. It is almost needless to remark that, with the usual foresight of men, the hatch is of a size unsuited to the log, and therefore, as it hangs suspended, a chorus of counsel surges up from below and from all sides.

The officer in command on this particular hatch presently shouts "Lower away," waving his hand gracefully from the wrist as though he were practising for piano playing, but really to guide Shoo Fly, who is driving the donkey engine. The tremendous log hovers over the hatch, and then gradually, "softly, softly," as Shoo Fly would say, disappears into the bowels of the ship, until a heterogeneous yell in English and Kru warns the trained intelligence that it is low enough, or more probably too low. "Heave a link!" shouts the officer, and Shoo Fly and the donkey engine heaveth. Then the official hand waves, and the crane swings round with a whiddle, whiddle, and there is a moment's pause, the rope strains, and groans, and waits, and as soon as the most important and valuable people on board, such as the Captain, the Doctor, and myself, are within its reach to give advice, and look down

the hatch to see what is going on, that rope likes to break and comes clawing at us a mass of bent and broken wire, and as we scatter, the great log goes with a crash into the hold. Fortunately, the particular log I remember as indulging in this catastrophe did not go through the ship's bottom, as I confidently expected it had at the time, nor was any one killed, such a batch of miraculous escapes occurring for the benefit of the officer and men below as can only be reasonably accounted for by their having expected this sort of thing to happen.

Quaint are the ways of mariners at times. That time they took on quantities of great logs at the main gangway, well knowing that they would have to go down the hatch aft, and that this would entail hauling them along the narrow alley ways. This process was effected by rigging the steam winches aft, then two sharp hooks connected together by a chain at the end of the wire hawser were fixed into the head of the log, and the word passed "Haul away," water being thrown on the deck to make the logs slip easier over it, and billets of wood put underneath the log with the same intention, and the added hope of saving the deck from being torn by the rough hewn, hard monster.

Now there are two superstitions rife regarding this affair, The first is, that if you hitch the hooks lightly into each side of the log's head and then haul hard, the weight of the log will cause the hooks to get firmly and safely embedded in it. The second is, that the said weight will infallibly keep the billets under it in due position.

Nothing short of getting himself completely and permanently killed shakes the mariner's faith in these notions. What often happens is this. When the strain is at its highest the hooks slip out of the wood, and try and scalp any

one that's handy, and now and again they succeed. There was a man helping that day at Axim whom the Doctor said had only last voyage fell a victim to the hooks; they slipped out of the head of the log and played round his own, laying it open to the bone at the back, cutting him over the ears and across the forehead, and if that man had not had a phenomenally thick skull he must have died. But no, there he was on this voyage as busy as ever with the timber, close to those hooks, and evidently with his superstitious trust in the invariable embedding of hooks in timber unabated one fraction.

Sometimes the performance is varied by the hauling rope itself parting and going up the alley way like a boa constrictor in a fit, whisking up black passengers and boxes full of screaming parrots in its path from places they had placed themselves, or been placed in, well out of its legitimate line of march. But the day it succeeds in clawing hold of and upsetting the cook's grease tub, which lives in the alley-way, that is the day of horror for the First officer and the inauguration of a period of ardent holystoning for his minions.

Should, however, the broken rope fail to find, as the fox-hunters would say, in the alley-way, it flings itself in a passionate embrace round the person of the donkey engine aft, and gives severe trouble there. The mariners, with an admirable faith and patience, untwine it, talking seriously to it meanwhile, and then fix it up again, may be with more care, and the shout, "Heave away!"—goes forth again; the rope groans and creaks, the hooks go in well on either side of the log, and off it moves once more with a graceful, dignified glide towards its destination. The Bo'sun and Chips with their eyes on the man at the winch, and let us

hope their thoughts employed in the penitential contemplation of their past sins, so as to be ready for the consequences likely to arise for them if the rope parts again, do not observe the little white note—underbill—as a German would call it, which is getting nearer and nearer the end of the log, which has stuck to the deck. In a few moments the log is off it, and down on Chips' toes, who returns thanks with great spontaneity, in language more powerful then select. The Bo'sun yells, "Avast heaving, there!" and several other things, while his assistant Kruboys, chattering like a rookery when an old lady's pet parrot has just joined it, get crowbars and raise up the timber, and the Carpenter is a free man again, and the little white billet reinstated. "Haul away," roars the Bo'sun, "Abadeo Na nu de um oro de Kri Kri," join in the hoarse-voiced Kruboys, "Ji na oi," answers the excited Shoo Fly, and off goes that log again. The particular log whose goings on I am chronicling slewed round at this juncture with the force of a Roman battering ram, drove in the panel of my particular cabin, causing all sorts of bottles and things inside to cast themselves on the floor and smash, whereby I, going in after dark, got cut. But no matter, that log, one of the classic sized logs, was in the end safely got up the alley-way and duly stowed among its companions. For let West Africa send what it may, be it never so large or so difficult, be he never so ill-provided with tackle to deal with it, the West Coast mariner will have that thing on board, and ship it—all honour to his determination and ability.

The varieties of timber chiefly exported from the West African timber ports are *Oldfieldia Africana*, of splendid size and texture, commonly called mahogany, but really

teak, Bar and Camwood and Ebony. Bar and Cam are dye-woods, and, before the Anilines came in these woods were in great request; invaluable they were for giving the dull rich red to bandana handkerchiefs and the warm brown tints to tweed stuffs. Camwood was once popular with cabinet makers and wood-turners here, but of late years it has only come into this market in roots or twisty bits—all the better these for dyeing, but not for working up, and so it has fallen out of demand among cabinet makers in spite of its beautiful grain and fine colour, a pinky yellow when fresh cut, deepening rapidly on exposure to the air into a rich, dark red brown. Amongst old Spanish furniture you will find things made from Cam-wood that are a joy to the eye. There has been some confusion as to whether Bar and Camwood are identical—merely a matter of age in the same tree or no—but I have seen the natives cutting both these timbers, and they are quite different trees in the look of them, as any one would expect from seeing a billet of Bar and one of Cam; the former is a light porous wood and orange colour when fresh cut, while 500 billets of Bar and only 150 to 200 of Cam go to the ton.

There are many signs of increasing enterprise in the West African timber trade, but so far this form of wealth has barely been touched, so vast are the West African forests and so varied the trees therein. At present it, like most West African industries, is fearfully handicapped by the deadly climate, the inferiority and expensiveness of labour, and the difficulties of transport.

At present it is useless to fell a tree, be it ever so fine, if it is growing at any distance from a river down which you can float it to the sea beach, for it would be impossible to

drag it far through the Liane-tangled West African forest.

Indeed, it is no end of a job to drag a decent-sized log even two hundred yards or so to a river. The way it is done is this. When felling the tree you arrange that its head shall fall away from the river, then trim off the rough stuff and hew the heavy end to a rough point, so that when the boys are pully-hauling down the slope—you must have a slope—to the bank, it may not only be able to pierce the opposing undergrowth spearwise more easily than if its end were flat or jagged, but also by the fact of its own weight it may help their exertions.

I have seen one or two grand scenes on the Ogowé with trees felled on steep mountain sides, wherein you had only got to arrange these circumstances, start your log on its downward course to the river, get out of the fair way of it, and leave the rest to gravity, which carried things through in grand style, with a crashing rush and a glorious splash into the river. You had, of course, to take care you had a clear bank and not one fringed with dead-trees, into which your mighty spear would embed itself and also to have a canoe load of energetic people to get hold of the log and keep it out of the current of that lively Ogowé river, or it would go off to Kama Country express. But this work on timber was far easier than that on the Gold or Ivory Coasts, whence most timber comes to Europe, and where the make of the country does not give you so fully the assistance of steep gradients.

After what I have told you about the behaviour of these great baulks on board ship you will not imagine that the log behaves well during its journey on land. Indeed, my belief in the immorality of inanimate nature has been

much strengthened by observing the conduct of African timber. Nor am I alone in judging it harshly, for an American missionary once said to me, "Ah! it will be a grand day for Africa when we have driven out all the heathen devils; they are everywhere, not only in graven images, but just universally scattered around." The remark was made on the occasion of a floor that had been laid down by a mission carpenter coming up on its own account, as native timber floors laid down by native carpenters customarily come, though the native carpenter lays Norway boards well enough.

When, after much toil and tribulation and uproar, the log has been got down to the river and floated, iron rings are driven into it, and it is branded with its owner's mark. Then the owner does not worry himself much about it for a month or so, but lets it float its way down and soak, and generally lazy about until he gets together sufficient of its kind to make a shipment.

One of the many strange and curious things they told me of on the West Coast was that old idea that hydrophobia is introduced into Europe by means of these logs. There is, they say, on the West Coast of Africa a peculiarly venomous scorpion that makes its home on the logs while they are floating in the river, three-parts submerged on account of weight, and the other part most delightfully damp and cool to the scorpion's mind. When the logs get shipped frequently the scorpion gets shipped too, and subsequently comes out in the hold and bites the resident rats. So far I accept this statement fully, for I have seen more than enough rats and scorpions in the hold, and the West Coast scorpions are particularly venomous, but feeling that in these days it is the duty of every one to keep their belief for

religious purposes, I cannot go on and in a whole souled way believe that the dogs of Liverpool, Havre, Hamburg, and Marseilles worry the said rats when they arrive in dock, and, getting bitten by them, breed rabies.

Nevertheless, I do not interrupt and say, "Stuff," because if you do this to the old coaster he only offers to fight you, or see you shrivelled, or bet you half-a-crown, or in some other time-honoured way demonstrate the truth of his assertion, and he will, moreover, go on and say there is more hydrophobia in the aforesaid towns than elsewhere, and as the chances are you have not got hydrophobia statistics with you, you are lost. Besides, it's very unkind and unnecessary to make a West Coaster go and say or do things which will only make things harder for him in the time "to come," and anyhow if you are of a cautious, nervous disposition you had better search your bunk for scorpions, before turning in, when you are on a vessel that has got timber on board, and the chances are that your labours will be rewarded by discovering specimens of this interesting animal.

Scorpions and centipedes are inferior in worrying power to driver ants, but they are a feature in Coast life, particularly in places—Cameroons, for example. If you see a man who seems to you to have a morbid caution in the method of dealing with his hat or folded dinner napkin, judge him not harshly, for the chances are he is from Cameroon, where there are scorpions—scorpions of great magnitude and tough constitutions, as was demonstrated by a little affair up here that occurred in a family I know.

The inhabitants of the French Ivory Coast are an exceedingly industrious and enterprising set of people in commercial matters, and the export and import trade is computed by a recent French authority at ten million

francs per annum. No official computation, however, of the trade of a Coast district is correct, for reasons I will not enter into now.

The native coinage equivalent here is the manilla—a bracelet in a state of sinking into a more conventional token. These manillas are made of an alloy of copper and pewter, manufactured mainly at Birmingham and Nantes, the individual value being from 20 to 25 centimes.

Changes for the worse as far as English trade is concerned have passed over the trade of the Ivory Coast recently, but the way, even in my time, trade was carried on was thus. The native traders deal with the captains of the English sailing vessels and the French factories, buying palm oil and kernels from the bush people with merchandise, and selling it to the native or foreign shippers. They get paid in manillas, which they can, when they wish, get changed again into merchandise either at the factory or on the trading ship. The manilla is, therefore, a kind of bank for the black trader, a something he can put his wealth into when he wants to store it for a time.

They have a singular system of commercial correspondence between the villages on the beach and the villages on the other side of the great lagoon that separates it from the mainland. Each village on the shore has its particular village on the other side of the lagoon, thus Alindja Badon is the interior commercial centre for Grand Jack on the beach, Abia for Anamaquoa, or Half Jack, and so on. Anamaquoa is only separated from its sister village by a little lagoon that is fordable, but the other towns have to communicate by means of canoes.

Grand Bassam, Assini, and Half Jack are the most important places on the Ivory Coast. The main portion of the first-named town is out of sight from seaboard, being some five miles up the Costa River, and all you can see on the beach are two large but lonesome-looking factories. Half Jack, Jack a Jack, or Anamaquoa—there is nothing like having plenty of names for one place in West Africa, because it leads people at home who don't know the joke to think there is more of you than there naturally is—gives its name to the bit of coast from Cape Palmas to Grand Bassam, this coast being called the Half Jack, or quite as often the Bristol Coast, and for many years it was the main point of call for the Guineamen, old-fashioned sailing vessels which worked the Bristol trade in the Bights.

This trade was established during the last century by Mr. Henry King, of Bristol, for supplying labour to the West Indies, and was further developed by his two sons, Richard, who hated men-o'-war like a quaker, and William who loved science, both very worthy gentlemen. After their time up till when I was first on the Coast, this firm carried on trade both on the Bristol Coast and down in Cameroon, which in old days bore the name of Little Bristol-in-Hell, but now the trade is in other hands.

According to Captain Binger, there are now about 30 sailing ships still working the Ivory Coast trade, two of them the property of an energetic American captain, but the greater part belonging to Bristol. Their voyage out from Bristol varies from 60 to 90 days, according as you get through the Horse latitudes—so-called from the number of horses that used to die in this region of calms when the sailing vessels bringing them across from South America

lay week out and week in short alike of wind and water.

In old days, when the Bristol ship got to the Coast she would call at the first village on it. Then the native chiefs and head men would come on board and haggle with the captain as to the quantity of goods he would let them have on trust, they covenanting to bring in exchange for them in a given time a certain number of slaves or so much produce. This arrangement being made, off sailed the Guineaman to his next village, where a similar game took place all the way down Coast to Grand Bassam.

When she had paid out the trust goods to the last village, she would stand out to sea and work back to her first village of call on the Bristol Coast to pick up the promised produce, this arrangement giving the native traders time to collect it. In nine cases out of ten, however, it was not ready for her, so on she went to the next. By this time the Guineaman would present the spectacle of a farmhouse that had gone mad, grown masts, and run away to sea; for the decks were protected from the burning sun by a well-built thatch roof, and she lounged along heavy with the rank sea growth of these seas. Sometimes she would be unroofed by a tornado, sometimes seized by a pirate parasitic on the Guinea trade, but barring these interruptions to business she called regularly on her creditors, from some getting the promised payment, from others part of it, from others again only the renewal of the promise, and then when she had again reached her last point of call put out to sea once more and worked back again to the first creditor village. In those days she kept at this weary round until she got in all her debts, a process that often took her four or five years, and cost the lives of half her crew from fever, and then her consorts

drafted a man or so on board her and kept her going until she was full enough of pepper, gold, gum, ivory, and native gods to sail for Bristol. There, when the Guineaman came in, were grand doings for the small boys, what with parrots, oranges, bananas, &c., but sad times for most of those whose relatives and friends had left Bristol on her.

In much the same way, and with much the same risks, the Bristol Coast trade goes on now, only there is little of it left, owing to the French system of suppressing trade. Palm oil is the modern equivalent to slaves, and just as in old days the former were transhipped from the coasting Guineamen to the transatlantic slavers, so now the palm oil is shipped off on to the homeward bound African steamers, while, as for the joys and sorrows, century-change affects them not. So long as Western Africa remains the deadliest region on earth there will be joy over those who come up out of it; heartache and anxiety over those who are down there fighting as men fought of old for those things worth the fighting, God, Glory and Gold; and grief over those who are dead among all of us at home who are ill-advised enough to really care for men who have the pluck to go there.

During the smoke season when dense fogs hang over the Bight of Benin, the Bristol ships get very considerably sworn at by the steamers. They have letters for them, and they want oil off them; between ourselves, they want oil off every created thing, and the Bristol boat is not easy to find. So the steamer goes dodging and fumbling about after her, swearing softly about wasting coal all the time, and more harshly still when he finds he has picked up the wrong Guineaman, only modified if she has stuff to send home, stuff which he conjures the Bristol captain by the

love he bears him to keep, and ship by him when he is on his way home from windward ports, or to let him have forthwith.

Sometimes the Bristolman will signal to a passing steamer for a doctor. The doctors of the African and British African boats are much thought of all down the Coast, and are only second in importance to the doctor on board a telegraph ship, who, being a rare specimen, is regarded as, *ipso facto*, more gifted, so that people will save up their ailments for the telegraph ship's medical man, which is not a bad practice, as it leads commonly to their getting over those ailments one way or the other by the time the telegraph ship arives. It is reported that one day one of the Bristolmen ran up an urgent signal to a passing mail steamer for a doctor, and the captain thereof ran up a signal of assent, and the doctor went below to get his medicines ready. Meanwhile, instead of displaying a patient gratitude, the Bristolman signalled "Repeat signal." "Give it 'em again," said the steamboat captain, "those Bristolmen ain't got no Board schools." Still the Bristolman kept bothering, running up her original signal, and in due course off went the doctor to her in the gig. When he returned his captain asked him, saying, "Pills, are they all mad on board that vessel or merely drunk as usual?" "Well," says the doctor, "that's curious, for it's the very same question Captain N. has asked me about you. He is very anxious about your mental health, and wants to know why you keep on signalling 'Haul to, or I will fire into you,'" and the story goes that an investigation of the code and the steamer's signal supported the Bristolman's reading, and the subject was dropped in steam circles.

Although the Bristolmen do not carry doctors, they are

provided with grand medicine chests, the supply of medicines in West Africa being frequently in the inverse ratio with the ability to administer them advantageously.

Inside the lid of these medicine chests is a printed paper of instructions, each drug having a number before its name, and a hint as to the proper dose after it. Thus, we will say, for example, 1 was jalap; 2, calomel; 3, croton oil; and 4, quinine. Once upon a time there was a Bristol captain, as good a man as need be and with a fine head on him for figures. Some of his crew were smitten with fever when he was out of number 4, so he argues that 2 and 2 are 4 all the world over, but being short of 2, it being a popular drug, he further argues 3 and 1 make 4 as well, and the dose of 4 being so much he makes that dose up out of jalap and croton oil. Some of the patients survived; at least, a man I met claimed to have done so. His report is not altogether reproducible in full, but, on the whole, the results of the treatment went more towards demonstrating the danger of importing raw abstract truths into everyday affairs than to encouraging one to repeat the experiment of arithmetical therapeutics.

CHAPTER IV

FISHING IN WEST AFRICA.

THERE is one distinctive charm about fishing—its fascinations will stand any climate. You may sit crouching on ice over a hole inside the arctic circle, or on a Windsor chair by the side of the River Lea in the so-called temperate zone, or you may squat in a canoe on an equatorial river, with the surrounding atmosphere 45 per cent. mosquito, and if you are fishing you will enjoy yourself; and what is more important than this enjoyment, is that you will not embitter your present, nor endanger your future, by going home in a bad temper, whether you have caught anything or not, provided always that you are a true fisherman.

This is not the case with other sports; I have been assured by experienced men that it "makes one feel awfully bad" when, after carrying for hours a very heavy elephant gun, for example, through a tangled forest you have got a wretched bad chance of a shot at an elephant; and as for football, cricket, &c., well, I need hardly speak of the unchristian feelings they engender in the mind towards umpires and successful opponents.

Being, as above demonstrated, a humble, but enthusiastic, devotee of fishing—I dare not say, as my great predecessor Dame Juliana Berners says, "with an angle," because my

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EATANGA CANOES.

conscience tells me I am a born poacher,—I need hardly remark that when I heard, from a reliable authority at Gaboon, that there were lakes in the centre of the island of Corisco, and that these fresh-water lakes were fished annually by representative ladies from the villages on this island, and that their annual fishing was just about due, I decided that I must go there forthwith. Now, although Corisco is not more than twenty miles out to sea from the Continent, it is not a particularly easy place to get at nowadays, no vessels ever calling there; so I got, through the kindness of Dr. Nassau, a little schooner and a black crew, and, forgetting my solemn resolve, formed from the fruits of previous experiences, never to go on to an Atlantic island again, off I sailed. I will not go into the adventures of that voyage here. My reputation as a navigator was great before I left Gaboon. I had a record of having once driven my bowsprit through a conservatory, and once taken all the paint off one side of a smallpox hospital, to say nothing of repeatedly having made attempts to climb trees in boats I commanded, but when I returned, I had surpassed these things by having successfully got my main-mast jammed up a tap, and I had done sufficient work in discovering new sandbanks, rock shoals, &c., in Corisco Bay, and round Cape Esterias, to necessitate, or call for, a new edition of *The West African Pilot.*

Corisco Island is about three miles long by 1¾ wide: its latitude 0·56 N., long. 9°20½ E. Mr. Winwood Reade was about the last traveller to give a description of Corisco, and a very interesting description it is. He was there in the early sixties, and was evidently too fully engaged with a drunken captain and a mad Malay

cook to go inland. In his days small trading vessels used to call at Corisco for cargo, but they do so no longer, all the trade in the Bay now being carried on at Messrs. Holt's factory on Little Eloby Island (an island nearer in shore), and on the mainland at Coco Beach, belonging to Messrs. Hatton and Cookson.

In Winwood Reade's days, too, there was a settlement of the American Presbyterian Society on Corisco, with a staff of white men. This has been abandoned to a native minister, because the Society found that facts did not support their theory that the island would be more healthy than the mainland, the mortality being quite as great as at any continental station, so they moved on to the continent to be nearer their work. The only white people that are now on Corisco are two Spanish priests and three nuns; but of these good people I saw little or nothing, as my headquarters were with the Presbyterian native minister, Mr. Ibea, and there was war between him and the priests.

The natives are Benga, a coast tribe now rapidly dying out. They were once a great tribe, and in the old days, when the slavers and the whalers haunted Corisco Bay, these Benga were much in demand as crew men, in spite of the reputation they bore for ferocity. Nowadays the grown men get their living by going as travelling agents for the white merchants into the hinterland behind Corisco Bay, amongst the very dangerous and savage tribes there, and when one of them has made enough money by this trading, he comes back to Corisco, and rests, and luxuriates in the ample bosom of his family until he has spent his money—then he gets trust from the white trader, and goes to the

Bush again, pretty frequently meeting there the sad fate of the pitcher that went too often to the well, and getting killed by the hinterlanders.

On arriving at Corisco Island, I "soothed with a gift, and greeted with a smile" the dusky inhabitants. "Have you got any tobacco?" said they. "I have," I responded, and a friendly feeling at once arose. I then explained that I wanted to join the fishing party. They were quite willing, and said the ladies were just finishing planting their farms before the tornado season came on, and that they would make the peculiar, necessary baskets at once. They did not do so at once in the English sense of the term, but we all know there is no time south of 40°, and so I waited patiently, walking about the island.

Corisco is locally celebrated for its beauty. Winwood Reade says: "It is a little world in miniature, with its miniature forests, miniature prairies, miniature mountains, miniature rivers, and miniature precipices on the sea-shore." In consequence partly of these things, and partly of the inhabitants' rooted idea that the proper way to any place on the island is round by the sea-shore, the paths of Corisco are as strange as several other things are in latitude 0, and, like the other things, they require understanding to get on with.

They start from the beach with the avowed intention of just going round the next headland because the tide happens to be in too much for you to go along by the beach; but, once started, their presiding genii might sing to the wayfarer Mr. Kipling's "The Lord knows where we shall go, dear lass, and the Deuce knows what we shall see." You go up a path off the beach gladly, because you have been wading in fine white sand over your ankles, and

in banks of rotten and rotting seaweed, on which centipedes, and other catamumpuses, crawl in profusion, not to mention sand-flies, &c., and the path makes a plunge inland, as much as to say, "Come and see our noted scenery," and having led you through a miniature swamp, a miniature forest, and a miniature prairie, "It's a pity," says the path, "not to call at So-and-so's village now we are so near it," and off it goes to the village through a patch of grass or plantation. It wanders through the scattered village calling at houses, for some time, and then says, "Bless me, I had nearly forgotten what I came out for; we must hurry back to that beach," and off it goes through more scenery, landing you ultimately about fifty yards off the place where you first joined it, in consequence of the South Atlantic waves flying in foam and fury against a miniature precipice—the first thing they have met that dared stay their lordly course since they left Cape Horn or the ice walls of the Antarctic.

At last the fishing baskets were ready, and we set off for the lakes by a path that plunged into a little ravine, crossed a dried swamp, went up a hill, and on to an open prairie, in the course of about twenty minutes. Passing over this prairie, and through a wood, we came to another prairie, like most things in Corisco just then (August), dried up, for it was the height of the dry season. On this prairie we waited for some of the representative ladies from other villages to come up; for without their presence our fishing would not have been legal. When you wait in West Africa it eats into your lifetime to a considerable extent, and we spent half-an-hour or so standing howling, in prolonged, intoned howls, for the absent ladies, notably grievously for On-gou-ta, and when they came not, we threw

ourselves down on the soft, fine, golden-brown grass, in the sun, and all, with the exception of myself, went asleep. After about two and a half hours I was aroused from the contemplation of the domestic habits of some beetles, by hearing a crackle, crackle, interspersed with sounds like small pistols going off, and looking round saw a fog of blue-brown smoke surmounting a rapidly-advancing wall of red fire.

I rose, and spread the news among my companions, who were sleeping, with thumps and kicks. Shouting at a sleeping African is labour lost. And then I made a bee-line for the nearest green forest wall of the prairie, followed by my companions. Yet, in spite of some very creditable sprint performances on their part, three members of the band got scorched. Fortunately, however, our activity landed us close to the lakes, so the scorched ones spent the rest of the afternoon sitting in mud-holes, comforting themselves with the balmy black slime. The other ladies turned up soon after this, and said that the fire had arisen from some man having set fire to a corner of the prairie some days previously, to make a farm; he had thought the fire was out round his patch, whereas it was not, but smouldering in the tussocks of grass, and the wind had sprung up that afternoon from a quarter that fanned it up. I said, "People should be very careful of fire," and the scorched ladies profoundly agreed with me, and said things I will not repeat here, regarding "that fool man" and his female ancestors.

The lakes are pools of varying extent and depth, in the bed-rock[1] of the island, and the fact that they are sur-

[1] Specimens of rock identified by the Geological Survey, London, as cretaceous, and said by other geologists up here to be possibly Jurassic.

rounded by thick forests on every side, and that the dry season is the cool season on the Equator, prevents them from drying up.

Most of these lakes are encircled by a rim of rock, from which you jump down into knee-deep black slime, and then, if you are a representative lady, you waddle, and squeal, and grunt, and skylark generally on your way to the water in the middle. If it is a large lake you are working, you and your companions drive in two rows of stakes, cutting each other more or less at right angles, more or less in the middle of the lake, so as to divide it up into convenient portions. Then some ladies with their specially shaped baskets form a line, with their backs to the bank, and their faces to the water-space, in the enclosure, holding the baskets with one rim under water. The others go into the water, and splash with hands, and feet, and sticks, and, needless to say, yell hard all the time. The naturally alarmed fish fly from them, intent on getting into the mud, and are deftly scooped up by the peck by the ladies in their baskets. In little lakes the staking is not necessary, but the rest of the proceedings are the same. Some of the smaller lakes are too deep to be thus fished at all, being, I expect, clefts in the rock, such as you see in other parts of the island, sometimes 30 or 40 feet deep.

The usual result of the day's fishing is from twelve to fifteen bushels of a common mud-fish,[1] which is very good eating. The spoils are divided among the representative ladies, and they take them back to their respective villages and distribute them. Then ensues, that same evening, a tremendous fish supper, and the fish left over are smoked

[1] *Clarias laviaps.*

and carefully kept as a delicacy, to make sauce with, &c., until the next year's fishing day comes round.

The waters of West Africa, salt, brackish, and fresh abound with fish, and many kinds are, if properly cooked, excellent eating. For culinary purposes you may divide the fish into sea-fish, lagoon-fish and river-fish; the first division, the sea-fish, are excellent eating, and are in enormous quantities, particularly along the Windward Coast on the Great West African Bank. South of this, at the mouths of the Oil rivers, they fall off, from a culinary standpoint, though scientifically they increase in charm, as you find hereabouts fishes of extremely early types, whose relations have an interesting series of monuments in the shape of fossils, in the sandstone; but if primeval man had to live on them when they were alive together, I am sorry for him, for he might just as well have eaten mud, and better, for then he would not have run the risk of getting choked with bones. On the South-West Coast the culinary value goes up again; there are found quantities of excellent deep-sea fish, and round the mouths of the rivers, shoals of bream and grey mullet.

The lagoon-fish are not particularly good, being as a rule supremely muddy and bony; they have their uses, however, for I am informed that they indicate to Lagos when it may expect an epidemic; to this end they die, in an adjacent lagoon, and float about upon its surface, wrong side up, until decomposition does its work. Their method of prophecy is a sound one, for it demonstrates (*a*) that the lagoon drinking water is worse than usual; (*b*) if it is not already fatal they will make it so.

The river-fish of the Gold Coast are better than those of the mud-sewers of the Niger Delta, because the Gold Coast

rivers are brisk sporting streams, with the exception of the Volta, and at a short distance inland they come down over rocky rapids with a stiff current. The fish of the upper waters of the Delta rivers are better than those down in the mangrove-swamp region ; and in the South-West Coast rivers, with which I am personally well acquainted, the up-river fish are excellent in quality, on account of the swift current. I will however leave culinary considerations, because cooking is a subject upon which I am liable to become diffuse, and we will turn to the consideration of the sporting side of fishing.

Now, there is one thing you will always hear the Gold Coaster (white variety) grumbling about, "There is no sport." He has only got himself to blame. Let him try and introduce the Polynesian practice of swimming about in the surf, without his clothes, and with a suitable large, sharp knife, slaying sharks—there's no end of sharks on the Gold Coast, and no end of surf. The Rivermen have the same complaint, and I may recommend that they should try spearing sting-rays, things that run sometimes to six feet across the wings, and every inch of them wicked, particularly the tail. There is quite enough danger in either sport to satisfy a Sir Samuel Baker ; for myself, being a nervous, quiet, rational individual, a large cat-fish in a small canoe supplies sufficient excitement.

The other day I went out for a day's fishing on an African river. I and two black men, in a canoe, in company with a round net, three stout fishing-lines, three paddles, Dr. Günther's *Study of Fishes*, some bait in an old Morton's boiled-mutton tin, a little manioc, stinking awfully (as is its wont), a broken calabash baler, a lot of dirty water to sit in, and happy and contented minds. I catalogue these

things because they are either essential to, or inseparable from, a good day's sport in West Africa. Yes, even *I*, ask my vict——friends down there, I feel sure they will tell you that they never had such experiences before my arrival. I fear they will go on and say, "Never again!" and that it was all my fault, which it was not. When things go well they ascribe it, and their survival, to Providence or their own precautions; when things are merely usual in horror, it's my fault, which is a rank inversion of the truth, for it is only when circumstances get beyond my control, and Providence takes charge, that accidents happen. I will demonstrate this by continuing my narrative. We paddled away, far up a mangrove creek, and then went up against the black mud-bank, with its great network of grey-white roots, surmounted by the closely-interlaced black-green foliage. Absolute silence reigned, as it can only reign in Africa in a mangrove swamp. The water-laden air wrapped round us like a warm, wet blanket. The big mangrove flies came silently to feed on us and leave their progeny behind them in the wounds to do likewise. The stink of the mud, strong enough to break a window, mingled fraternally with that of the sour manioc.

I was reading, the negroes, always quiet enough when fishing, were silently carrying on that great African native industry—scratching themselves—so, with our lines over side, life slid away like a dreamless sleep, until the middle man hooked a cat-fish. It came on board with an awful grunt, right in the middle of us; flop, swish, scurry and yell followed; I tucked the study of fishes in general under my arm and attended to this individual specimen, shouting "Lef em, lef em; hev em for water one time, you

sons of unsanctified house lizards,"[1] and such like valuable advice and admonition. The man in the more remote end of the canoe made an awful swipe at the 3 ft.-long, grunting, flopping, yellow-grey, slimy, thing, but never reached it owing to the paddle meeting in mid-air with the flying leg of the man in front of him, drawing blood profusely. I really fancy, about this time, that, barring the cat-fish and myself, the occupants of the canoe were standing on their heads, with a view of removing their lower limbs from the terrible pectoral and dorsal fins, with which our prey made such lively play.

"*Brevi spatio interjecto*," as Cæsar says, in the middle of a bad battle, over went the canoe, while the cat-fish went off home with the line and hook. One black man went to the bank, whither, with a blind prescience of our fate, I had flung, a second before, the most valuable occupant of the canoe, *The Study of Fishes*. I went personally to investigate fluvial deposit *in situ*. When I returned to the surface—accompanied by great swirls of mud and great bubbles of the gases of decomposition I had liberated on my visit to the bottom of the river—I observed the canoe floating bottom upwards, accompanied by Morton's tin, the calabash, and the paddles, while on the bank one black man was engaged in hauling the other one out by the legs; fortunately this one's individual god had seen to it that his toes should become entangled in the net, and this floated, and so indicated to his companion where he was, when he had dived into the mud and got fairly embedded.

Now it's my belief that the most difficult thing in the

[1] Translation: "Leave it alone! Leave it alone! Throw it into the water at once! What did you catch it for?"

world is to turn over a round-bottomed canoe that is wrong side up, when you are in the water with the said canoe. The next most difficult thing is to get into the canoe, after accomplishing triumph number one, and had it not been for my black friends that afternoon, I should not have done these things successfully, and there would be by now another haunted creek in West Africa, with a mud and blood bespattered ghost trying for ever to turn over the ghost of a little canoe. However, all ended happily. We collected all our possessions, except the result of the day's fishing—the cat-fish—but we had had as much of him as we wanted, and so, adding a thankful mind to our contented ones, went home.

None of us gave a verbatim report of the incident. I held my tongue for fear of not being allowed out fishing again, and I heard my men giving a fine account of a fearful fight, with accompanying prodigies of valour, that we had had with a witch crocodile. I fancy that must have been just their way of putting it, because it is not good form to be frightened by cat-fish on the West Coast, and I cannot for the life of me remember even having seen a witch crocodile that afternoon.

I must, however, own that native methods of fishing are usually safe, though I fail to see what I had to do in producing the above accident. The usual method of dealing with a cat-fish is to bang him on the head with a club, and then break the spiny fins off, for they make nasty wounds that are difficult to heal, and very painful.

The native fishing-craft is the dug-out canoe in its various local forms. The Accra canoe is a very safe and firm canoe for work of any sort except heavy cargo, and it is particularly good for surf; it is, however, slower than

many other kinds. The canoe that you can get the greatest pace out of is undoubtedly the Adooma, which is narrow and flat-bottomed, and simply flies over the water. The paddles used vary also with locality, and their form is a mere matter of local fashion, for they all do their work well. There is the leaf-shaped Kru paddle, the trident-shaped Accra, the long-lozenged Niger, and the long-handled, small-headed Igalwa paddle; and with each of these forms the native, to the manner born, will send his canoe flying along with that unbroken sweep I consider the most luxurious and perfect form of motion on earth.

It is when it comes to sailing that the African is inferior. He does not sail half as much as he might, but still pretty frequently. The materials of which the sails are made vary immensely in different places, and the most beautiful are those at Loanda, which are made of small grass mats, with fringes, sewn together, and are of a warm, rich sand-colour. Next in beauty comes the branch of a palm, or other tree, stuck in the bows, and least in beauty is the fisherman's own damaged waist-cloth. I remember it used to seem very strange to me at first, to see my companion in a canoe take off his clothing and make a sail with it, on a wind springing up behind us. The very strangest sail I ever sailed under was a black man's blue trousers, they were tied waist upwards to a cross-stick, the legs neatly crossed, and secured to the thwarts of the canoe. You cannot well tack, or carry out any neat sailing evolutions with any of the African sails, particularly with the last-named form. The shape of the African sail is almost always in appearance a triangle, and fastened to a cross-stick which is secured to an upright one. It is not the form, however, that prevents it from being handy, but the

FALLS ON THE TONGUE RIVER.

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LOANDA CANOE WITH MAT SAILS.

way it is put up, almost always without sheets, for river and lake work, and it is tied together with tie tie—bush rope. If you should personally be managing one, and trouble threatens, take my advice, and take the mast out one time, and deal with that tie tie palaver at your leisure. Never mind what people say about this method not being seaman-like—you survive.

The mat sails used for sea-work are spread by a bamboo sprit. There is a single mast, to the head of which the sail is either hoisted by means of a small line run through the mast, or, more frequently, made fast with a seizing. Such a sail is worked by means of a sheet and a brace on the sprit, usually by one man, whose companion steers by a paddle over the stern; sometimes, however, one man performs both duties. Now and again you will find the luff of the sail bowlined out with another stick. This is most common round Sierra Leone.

The appliances for catching fish are, firstly, fish traps, sometimes made of hollow logs of trees, with one end left open and the other closed. One of these is just dropped alongside the bank, left for a week or so, until a fish family makes a home in it, and then it is removed with a jerk. Then there are fish-baskets made from split palm-stems tied together with tie tie; they are circular and conical, resembling our lobster pots and eel baskets, and they are usually baited with lumps of kank soaked in palm-oil. Then there are drag nets made of pineapple fibre, one edge weighted with stones tied in bunches at intervals; as a rule these run ten to twenty-five feet long, but in some places they are much longer. The longest I ever saw was when out fishing in the lovely harbour of San Paul de Loanda. This was over thirty feet and was weighted with bunches of clam

shells, and made of European yarn, as indeed most nets are when this is procurable by the natives, and it was worked by three canoes which were being poled about, as is usual in Loanda Harbour. Then there is the universal hook and line, the hook either of European make or the simple bent pin of our youth.

But my favourite method, and the one by which I got most of my fish up rivers or in creeks is the stockade trap. These are constructed by driving in stakes close together, leaving one opening, not in the middle of the stockade, but towards the up river end. In tidal waters these stockades are visited daily, at nearly low tide, for the high tide carries the fish in behind the stockade, and leaves them there on falling. Up river, above tide water, the stockades are left for several days, in order to allow the fish to congregate. Then the opening is closed up, the fisher-women go inside and throw out the water and collect the fish. There is another kind of stockade that gives great sport. During the wet season the terrific rush of water tears off bits of bank in such rivers as the Congo, and Ogowé, where, owing to the continual fierce current of fresh water the brackish tide waters do not come far up the river, so that the banks are not shielded by a great network of mangrove roots. In the Ogowé a good many of the banks are composed of a stout clay, and so the pieces torn off hang together, and often go sailing out to sea, on the current, waving their bushes, and even trees, gallantly in the broad Atlantic, out of sight of land. Bits of the Congo Free State are great at seafaring too, and owing to the terrific stream of the great Zaire, which spreads a belt of fresh water over the surface of the ocean 200 miles from land, ships fall in with these floating islands, with their trees still flourishing. The Ogowé is

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ST. PAUL DO LOANDA.

not so big as the Congo, but it is a very respectable stream even for the great continent of rivers, and it pours into the Atlantic, in the wet season, about 1,750,000 cubic feet of fresh water per second, on which float some of these islands. But by no means every island gets out to sea, many of them get into slack water round corners in the Delta region of the Ogowé and remain there, collecting all sorts of *débris* that comes down on the flood water, getting matted more and more firm by the floating grass, every joint of which grows on the smallest opportunity. In many places these floating islands are of considerable size; one I heard of was large enough to induce a friend of mine to start a coffee plantation on it; unfortunately the wretched thing came to pieces when he had cut down its trees and turned the soil up. And one I saw in the Karkola river, was a weird affair. It was in the river opposite our camp, and very slowly, but perceptibly it went round and round in an orbit, although it was about half an acre in extent. A good many of these bits of banks do not attain to the honour of becoming islands, but get on to sand-banks in their early youth, near a native town, to the joy of the inhabitants, who forthwith go off to them, and drive round them a stockade of stakes firmly anchoring them. Thousands of fishes then congregate round the little island inside the stockade, for the rich feeding in among the roots and grass, and the affair is left a certain time. Then the entrance to the stockade is firmly closed up, and the natives go inside and bale out the water, and catch the fish in baskets, tearing the island to pieces, with shouts and squeals of exultation. It's messy, but it is amusing, and you get tremendous catches.

A very large percentage of fish traps are dedicated to

the capture of shrimp and craw-fish, which the natives value highly when smoked, using them to make a sauce for their kank; among these is the shrimp-basket. These baskets are tied on sticks laid out in parallel lines of considerable extent. They run about three inches in diameter, and their length varies with the place that is being worked. The stakes are driven into the mud, and to each stake is tied a basket with a line of tie tie, the basket acting as a hat to the stake when the tide is ebbing; as the tide comes in, it lowers the basket into the current and carries into its open end large quantities of shrimps, which get entangled and packed by the force of the current into the tapering end of the basket, which is sometimes eight or ten feet from the mouth. You can always tell where there is a line of these baskets by seeing the line of attendant sea-gulls all solemnly arranged with their heads to win'ard, sea-gull fashion.

Another device employed in small streams for the capture of either craw-fish or small fish is a line of calabashes, or earthen pots with narrow mouths; these are tied on to a line, I won't say with tie tie, because I have said that irritating word so often, but still you understand they are; this line is tied to a tree with more, and carried across the stream, sufficiently slack to submerge the pots, and then to a tree on the other bank, where it is secured with the same material. A fetish charm is then secured to it that will see to it, that any one who interferes with the trap, save the rightful owner, will "swell up and burst," then the trap is left for the night, the catch being collected in the morning.

Single pots, well baited with bits of fish and with a suitable stone in to keep them steady, are frequently used alongside the bank. These are left for a day or more,

ROUND A KACONGO CAMP FIRE.

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and then the owner with great care, crawls along the edge of the bank and claps on a lid and secures the prey.

Hand nets of many kinds are used. The most frequent form is the round net, weighted all round its outer edge. This is used by one man, and is thrown with great deftness and grace, in shallow waters. I suppose one may hardly call the long wreaths of palm and palm branches, used by the Loango and Kacongo coast native for fishing the surf with, nets, but they are most effective. When the Calemma (the surf) is not too bad, two or more men will carry this long thick wreath out into it, and then drop it and drag it towards the shore. The fish fly in front of it on to the beach, where they fall victims to the awaiting ladies, with their baskets. Another very quaint set of devices is employed by the Kruboys whenever they go to catch their beloved land and shore crabs. I remember once thinking I had providentially lighted on a beautiful bit of ju-ju; the whole stretch of mud beach had little lights dotted over it on the ground. I investigated. They were crab-traps. "Bottle of Beer," "The Prince of Wales," "Jane Ann," and "Pancake" had become—by means we will not go into here—possessed of bits of candle, and had cut them up and put in front of them pieces of wood in an ingenious way. The crab, a creature whose intelligence is not sufficiently appreciated, fired with a scientific curiosity, went to see what the light was made of, and then could not escape, or perhaps did not try to escape, but stood spell-bound at the beauty of the light; anyhow, they fell victims to their spirit of inquiry. I have also seen drop-traps put for crabs round their holes. In this case the sense of the beauty of light in the crab is not relied on, and once in he is shut in, and cannot

go home and communicate the result of his investigations to his family.

Yet, in spite of all these advantages and appliances above cited, I grieve to say the West African, all along the Coast, decends to the unsportsmanlike trick of poisoning. Certain herbs are bruised and thrown into the water, chiefly into lagoons and river-pools. The method is effective, but I should doubt whether it is wholesome. These herbs cause the fish to rise to the surface stupefied, when they are scooped up with a calabash. Other herbs cause the fish to lie at the bottom, also stupefied, and the water in the pool is thrown out, and they are collected.

More as a pastime than a sport I must class the shooting of the peculiar hopping mud-fish by the small boys with bows and arrows, but this is the only way you can secure them as they go about star-gazing with their eyes on the tops of their heads, instead of attending to baited hooks, and their hearing (or whatever it is) is so keen that they bury themselves in the mud-banks too rapidly for you to net them. Spearing is another very common method of fishing. It is carried on at night, a bright light being stuck in the bow of the canoe, while the spearer crouching, screens his eyes from the glare with a plantain leaf, and drops his long-hafted spear into the fish as they come up to look at the light. It is usually the big bream that are caught in this way out in the sea, and the carp up in fresh water.

The manners and customs of many West African fishes are quaint. I have never yet seen that fish the natives often tell me about that is as big as a man, only thicker, and which walks about on its fins at night, in the forest, so I cannot vouch for it; nor for that other fish that hates the

crocodile, and follows her up and destroys her eggs, and now and again dedicates itself to its hate, and goes down her throat, and then spreads out its spiny fins and kills her.

The fish I know personally are interesting in quieter ways. As for instance the strange electrical fish, which sometimes have sufficient power to kill a duck and which are much given to congregating in sunken boats, causing much trouble when the boat has to be floated again, because the natives won't go near them, to bail her out.

Then there is that deeply trying creature the Ning Ning fish, who, when you are in some rivers in fresh water and want to have a quiet night's rest, just as you have tucked in your mosquito bar carefully and successfully, comes alongside and serenades you, until you have to get up and throw things at it with a prophetic feeling, amply supported by subsequent experience, that hordes of mosquitos are busily ensconcing themselves inside your mosquito bar. What makes the Ning Ning—it is called after its idiotic song—so maddening is that it never seems to be where you have thrown the things at it. You could swear it was close to the bow of the canoe when you shied that empty soda-water bottle or that ball of your precious indiarubber at it, but instantly comes "ning, ning, ning" from the stern of the canoe. It is a ventriloquist or goes about in shoals, I do not know which, for the latter and easier explanation seems debarred by their not singing in chorus; the performance is undoubtedly a solo; any one experienced in this fish soon finds out that it is not driven away or destroyed by an artillery of missiles, but merely lies low until its victim has got under his mosquito curtain, and resettled his mosquito palaver,—and then back it comes with its "ning ning."

A similar affliction is the salt-water drum-fish, with its "bum-bum." Loanda Harbour abounds with these, and so does Chiloango. In the bright moonlight nights I have looked overside and seen these fish in a wreath round the canoe, with their silly noses against the side, "bum-bumming" away; whether they admire the canoe, or whether they want it to come on and fight it out, I do not know, because my knowledge of the different kinds of fishes and of their internal affairs is derived from Dr. Günther's great work, and that contains no section on ichthyological psychology. The West African natives have, I may say, a great deal of very curious information on the thoughts of fishes, but, much as I liked those good people, I make it a hard and fast rule to hold on to my common-sense and keep my belief for religious purposes when it comes to these deductions from natural phenomena—not that I display this mental attitude externally, for there is always in their worst and wildest fetish notions an underlying element of truth. The fetish of fish is too wide a subject to enter on here, it acts well because it gives a close season to river and lagoon fish; the natives round Lake Ayzingo, for example, saying that if the first fishes that come up into the lake in the great dry season are killed, the rest of the shoal turn back, so on the arrival of this vanguard they are treated most carefully, talked to with "a sweet mouth," and given things. The fishes that form these shoals are *Hemichromis fasciatus* and *Chromis ogowensis*.

I know no more charming way of spending an afternoon than to leisurely paddle alone to the edge of the Ogowé sand bank in the dry season, and then lie and watch the ways of the water-world below. If you keep quiet, the fishes take no notice of you, and go on with their ordinary

avocations, under your eyes, hunting, and feeding, and playing, and fighting, happily and cheerily until one of the dreaded raptorial fishes appears upon the scene, and then there is a general scurry. Dreadful warriors are the little fishes that haunt sand banks (*Alestis Kingsleyæ*) and very bold, for when you put your hand down in the water, with some crumbs, they first make two or three attempts to frighten it, by sidling up at it and butting, but on finding there's no fight in the thing, they swagger into the palm of your hand and take what is to be got with an air of conquest; but before the supply is exhausted, there always arises a row among themselves, and the gallant bulls, some two inches long, will spin round and butt each other for a second or so, and then spin round again, and flap each other with their tails, their little red-edged fins and gill-covers growing crimson with fury. I never made out how you counted points in these fights, because no one ever seemed a scale the worse after even the most desperate duels.

Most of the West Coast tribes are inveterate fishermen. The Gold Coast native regards fishing as a low pursuit, more particularly oyster-fishing, or I should say oyster-gathering, for they are collected chiefly from the lower branches of the mangrove-trees; this occupation is, indeed, regarded as being only fit for women, and among all tribes the villages who turn their entire attention to fishing are regarded as low down in the social scale. This may arise from fetish reasons, but the idea certainly gains support from the conduct of the individual fisherman. Do not imagine, Brother Anglers, that I am hinting that the Gentle Art is bad for the moral nature of people like you and me, but I fear it is bad for the African. You see, the African, like most of us, can resist anything but temptation—he will resist attempts

to reform him, attempts to make him tell the truth, attempts to clothe, and keep him tidy, &c., and he will resist these powerfully; but give him real temptation and he succumbs, without the European preliminary struggle. He has by nature a kleptic bias, and you see being out at night fishing, he has chances—temptations, of succumbing to this —and so you see a man who has left his home at evening with only the intention of spearing fish, in his mind, goes home in the morning pretty often with his missionary's ducks, his neighbours' plantains, and a few odd trifles from the trader's beaches, in his canoe, and the outer world says "Dem fisherman, all time, all same for one, with tief man."[1]

The Accras, who are employed right down the whole West Coast, thanks to the valuable education given them by the Basel Mission as cooks, carpenters, and coopers, cannot resist fishing, let their other avocations be what they may. A friend of mine the other day had a new Accra cook. The man cooked well, and my friend vaunted himself, and was content for the first week. At the beginning of the second week the cooking was still good, but somehow or other, there was just the suspicion of a smell of fish about the house. The next day the suspicion merged into certainty. The third day the smell was insupportable, and the atmosphere unfit to support human life, but obviously healthy for flies.

The cook was summoned, and asked by Her Britannic Majesty's representative "Where that smell came from?" He said he "could not smell it, and he did not know." Fourth day, thorough investigation of the premises revealed the fact that in the back-yard there was a large clothes-horse which had been sent out by my friend's wife to air his

[1] Translation: "All fishermen are thieves."

clothes; this was literally converted into a screen by strings of fish in the process of drying, *i.e.*, decomposing in the sun.

The affair was eliminated from the domestic circle and cast into the Ocean by seasoned natives; and awful torture in this world and the next promised to the cook if he should ever again embark in the fish trade. The smell gradually faded from the house, but the poor cook, bereaved of his beloved pursuit, burst out all over in boils, and took to religious mania and drink, and so had to be sent back to Accra, where I hope he lives happily, surrounded by his beloved objects.

CHAPTER V.

FETISH.

Wherein the student of Fetish determines to make things quite clear this time, with results that any sage knowing the subject and the student would have safely prophesied; to which is added some remarks concerning the position of ancestor worship in West Africa.

THE final object of all human desire is a knowledge of the nature of God. The human methods, or religions, employed to gain this object are divisible into three main classes, inspired—

Firstly, the submission to and acceptance of a direct divine message.

Secondly, the attempt by human intellectual power to separate the conception of God from material phenomena, and regard Him as a thing apart and unconditioned.

Thirdly, the attempt to understand Him as manifest in natural phenomena.

I personally am constrained to follow this last and humblest method, and accept as its exposition Spinoza's statement of it, "Since without God nothing can exist or be conceived, it is evident that all natural phenomena involve and express the conception of God, as far as their essence and perfection extends. So we have a greater and more perfect knowledge of God in proportion to our

knowledge of natural phenomena. Conversely (since the knowledge of an effect through a cause is the same thing as the knowledge of a particular property of a cause), the greater our knowledge of natural phenomena the more perfect is our knowledge of the essence of God which is the cause of all things."[1] But I have a deep respect for all other forms of religion and for all men who truly believe, for in them clearly there is this one great desire of the knowledge of the nature of God, and "*Ein guter Mensch in seinem dunkeln Drange Ist sich des rechten Weges wohl bewusst.*" Nevertheless the most tolerant human mind is subject to a feeling of irritation over the methods whereby a fellow-creature strives to attain his end, particularly if those methods are a sort of heresy to his own, and therefore it is a most unpleasant thing for any religious-minded person to speak of a religion unless he either profoundly believes or disbelieves in it. For, if he does the one, he has the pleasure of praise; if he does the other, he has the pleasure of war, but the thing in between these is a thing that gives neither pleasure; it is like quarrelling with one's own beloved relations. Thus it is with Fetish and me. I cannot say I either disbelieve or believe in it, for, on the one hand, I clearly see it is a religion of the third class; but, on the other, I know that Fetish is a religion that is regarded by my fellow white men as the embodiment of all that is lowest and vilest in man—not altogether without cause. Before speaking further on it, however, I must say what I mean by Fetish, for "the word of late has got ill sorted."

I mean by Fetish the religion of the natives of the Western Coast of Africa, where they have not been influenced either by Christianity or Mohammedanism. I sin-

[1] Of the Divine Law, *Tractatus Theologico Politicus*, Spinoza.

cerely wish there were another name than Fetish which we could use for it, but the natives have different names for their own religion in different districts, and I do not know what other general name I could suggest, for I am sure that the other name sometimes used in place of Fetish, namely Juju, is, for all the fine wild sound of it, only a modification of the French word for toy or doll, *joujou*. The French claim to have visited West Africa in the fourteenth century, prior to the Portuguese, and whether this claim can be sustained on historic evidence or no, it is certain that the French have been on the Coast in considerable numbers since the fifteenth century, and no doubt have long called the little objects they saw the natives valuing so strangely *joujou*, just as I have heard many a Frenchman do down there in my time. Therefore, believing Juju to mean doll or toy, I do not think it is so true a word as Fetish; and, after all, West Africa has a prior right to the use of this word Fetish, for it has grown up out of the word *Feitiço* used by the Portuguese navigators who rediscovered West Africa with all its wealth and worries for modern Europe. These worthy voyagers, noticing the veneration paid by Africans to certain objects, trees, fish, idols, and so on, very fairly compared these objects with the amulets, talismans, charms, and little images of saints they themselves used, and called those things similarly used by the Africans *Feitiço*, a word derived from the Latin *factitius*, in the sense magically artful. Modern French and English writers have adopted this word from the Portuguese; but it is a modern word in its present use. It is not in Johnson, and the term *Fétichisme* was introduced by De Brosses in his remarkable book, *Du Culte des Dieux fetiches*, 1760; but doubtless, as Professor Tylor points out, it has obtained a

great currency from Comte's use of it to denote a general theory of primitive religion. Professor Tylor, most unfortunately for us who are interested in West African religion, confines the use of the word to one department of his theory of animism only—namely to the doctrine of spirits embodied in, or attached to, or conveying influence through certain material objects.[1]

I do not in the least deny Professor Tylor's right to use the word Fetish[2] in that restricted sense in his general study of comparative religion. I merely wish to mention that you cannot use it in this restricted sense, but want the whole of his grand theory of animism wherewith to describe the religion of the West Africans. For although there is in that religion a heavy percentage of embodied spirits, there is also a heavier percentage of unembodied spirits—spirits that have no embodiment in matter and spirits that only occasionally embody themselves in matter.

Take, for example, the gods of the Ewe and Tshi.[3] There is amongst them Tando, the native high god of Ashantee. He appears to his priesthood as a giant, tawny skinned, lank haired, and wearing the Ashantee robe. But when

[1] *Primitive Culture*, E. B. Tylor, p. 144.

[2] Professor Tylor kindly allowed me to place this statement before him, and he says that as the word Fetish, with the sense of the use of bones, claws, stones, and such objects as receptacles of spiritual influences, has had nearly two centuries of established usage, it would not be easy to set it aside, and he advises me to use the term West African religion, or in some way make my meaning clear without expecting to upset the established nomenclature of comparative ethnology.

[3] This word is pronounced by the natives and by people knowing them, Cheuwe, as Ellis undoubtedly knew, but presumably he spelt it Tshi to please the authorities.

visiting the laity, on whom he is exceedingly hard, he comes in pestilence and tempest, or, for more individual village visitations, as a small and miserable boy, desolate and crying for help and kindness, which, when given to him, Tando repays by killing off his benefactors and their fellow-villagers with a certain disease. This trick, I may remark, is not confined to Tando, for several other West African gods use it when sacrifices to them are in arrears; and I am certain it is more at the back of outcast children being neglected than is either sheer indifference to suffering or cruelty. Because, fearing the disease, your native will be far more likely to remember he is in debt to the god and go and pay an instalment, than to take in that child whom he thinks is the god who has come to punish.

But you have only to look through Ellis's important works, the "Tshi-speaking, Ewe-speaking, and Yoruba-speaking peoples of the West Coast of Africa," to find many instances of the gods of Fetish who do not require a material object to manifest themselves in. And I, while in West Africa, have often been struck by incidents that have made this point clear to me. When I have been out with native companions after nightfall, they pretty nearly always saw an apparition of some sort, frequently apparitions of different sorts, in our path ahead. Then came a pause, and after they had seen the apparition vanish, on we went—not cheerily, however, until we were well past the place where it had been seen. This place they closely examined, and decided whether it was an Abambo, or Manu, or whatever name these spirit classes had in their local language, or whether it was something worse that had been there, such as a Sasabonsum or Ombuiri.

They knew which it was from the physical condition of the spot. Either there was nothing there but ordinary path stuff; or there was white ash, or there was a log or rock, or tree branch, and the reason for the different emotion with which they regarded this latter was very simple, for it had been an inferior class spirit, one that their charms and howled incantations could guard them against. When there was ash, it had been a witch destroyed by the medicine they had thrown at it, or a medium class spirit they could get protection from "in town." But if "he left no ash" the rest of our march was a gloomy one; it was a bad business, and unless the Fetish authorities in town chose to explain that it was merely a demand for so much white calico, or a goat, &c., some one of our party would certainly get ill.

Well do I remember our greatest terror when out at night on a forest path. I believe him to have been a Sasabonsum, but he was very widely distributed—that is to say we dreaded him on the forest paths round Mungo Mah Lobeh; we confidently expected to meet him round Calabar; and, to my disgust, for he was a hindrance, when I thought I had got away from his distribution zone, down in the Ogowé region, coming home one night with a Fan hunter from Fula to Kangwe, I saw some one coming down the path towards us, and my friend threw himself into the dense bush beside the path so as to give the figure a wide berth. It was the old symptom. You see what we object to in this spirit is that one side of him is rotting and putrifying, the other sound and healthy, and it all depends on which side of him you touch whether you see the dawn again or no. Such being the case, and African bush paths being narrow, this spirit helps to make

evening walks unpopular, for there are places in every bush path where, if you meet him, you must brush against him—places where the wet season's rains have made the path a narrow ditch, with clay incurved walls above your head—places where the path turns sharply round a corner—places where it runs between rock walls. Such being the case, the risk of rubbing against his rotting side is held to be so great that it is best avoided by staying at home in the village with your wives and families, and playing the tom-tom or the orchid-fibre-stringed harp, or, if you are a bachelor, sitting in the village club-house listening to the old ones talking like retired Colonels. Yet however this may be, I should hesitate to call this half-rotten individual "a material object." Sometimes we had merry laughs after these meetings, for he was only So-and-so from the village—it was not him. Sometimes we had cold chills down the back, for we lost sight of him ; under our eyes he went and he left no ash.

Take again Mbuiri of the Mpongwe, who comes in the form usually of a man ; or Nkala, who comes as a crab ; or the great Nzambi of the Fjort—they leave no ash—and so on. This subject of apparition-forms is a very interesting one, and requires more investigation. For such gods as Nzambi Mpungu do not appear to human beings on earth at all, except in tempest and pestilence. The great gods next in order leave no ash. The witch, if he or she be destroyed, does leave ash, and the ordinary middle and lower class spirits leave the thing they have been in, so unaltered by their use of it that no one but a witch doctor can tell whether or no it has been possessed by a spirit.

You see therefore Fetish is in a way complex and cannot

be got into "worship of a material object." There is no worship in West Africa of a material not so possessed, for material objects are regarded as in themselves so low down in the scale of things that nothing of the human grade would dream of worshipping them. Moreover, apart from these apparitions, I do not think you can accurately use the word Fetish in its restricted sense to include the visions seen by witch-doctors, or incantations made of words possessing power in themselves, and yet these things are part and parcel of Fetish. In fact, not being a comparative ethnologist, but a student of West African religion, I wish to goodness those comparative ethnologists would get another word of their own, instead of using our own old West Coast one.

It is, however, far easier to state what Fetish is not, than to state what it is. Although a Darwinian to the core, I doubt if evolution in a neat and tidy perpendicular line, with Fetish at the bottom and Christianity at the top, represents the true state of things. It seems to me—I have no authority to fortify my position with, so it is only me—that things are otherwise in this matter. That there are lines of development in religious ideas, and that no form of religious idea is a thing restricted to one race, I will grant; but if you will make a scientific use of your imagination, most carefully on the lines laid down for that exercise by Professor Tyndall, I think you would see that the higher form of the Fetish idea is Brahmanism; and that the highest possible form it could attain to is shown by two passages in the works of absolutely white people to have already been reached,—first in that passage from a poem by an author, whose name I have never

known, though I have known the lines these five-and-twenty years—

> "God of the granite and the rose,
> Soul of the lily and the bee,
> The mighty tide of being flows
> In countless channels, Lord, from Thee.
> It springs to life in grass and flowers,
> Through every range of Being runs,
> And from Creation's mighty towers,
> Its glory flames in stars and suns"—

and secondly in this statement by Spinoza—"By the help of God, I mean the fixed and unchangeable order of nature, or chain of natural events, for I have said before and shown elsewhere that the universal laws of nature, according to which all things exist and are determined, are only another name for the eternal decrees of God, which always involves eternal truth and necessity, so that to say everything happens according to natural laws, and to say everything is ordained by the decree and ordinance of God, is to say the same thing. Now, since the power in nature is identical with the power of God, by which alone all things happen and are determined, it follows that whatsoever man as a part of nature provides himself with to aid and preserve his existence, or whatsoever nature affords him without his help, is given him solely by the Divine power acting either through human nature or through external circumstances. So whatever human nature can furnish itself with by its own efforts to preserve its existence may be fitly termed the inward aid of God, whereas whatever else accrues to man's profit from outward causes may be called the external aid of God." [1]

Now both these utterances are magnificent Fetish, and

[1] *The Vocation of the Hebrews*, Spinoza.

because I accept them as true, I have said I neither believe nor disbelieve in Fetish. I could quote many more passages from acknowledged philosophers, particularly from Goethe. If you want, for example, to understand the position of man in Nature according to Fetish, there is, as far as I know, no clearer statement of it made than is made by Goethe in his superb *Prometheus*. By all means read it, for you cannot know how things really stand until you do.

This was brought home to me very keenly when I was first out in West Africa. I had made friends with a distinguished witch doctor, or, more correctly speaking, he had made friends with me. I was then living in a deserted house the main charm of which was that it was the house that Mr. H. M. Stanley had lived in while he was waiting for a boat home after his first crossing Africa. This charm had not kept the house tidy, and it was a beetlesome place by day, while after nightfall, if you wanted to see some of the best insect society in Africa, and have regular Walpurgis all round, you had only got to light a lamp; but these things were advantageous to an insect collector like myself, therefore I lodge no complaint against the firm of traders to whom that house belongs. Well, my friend the witch doctor used to call on me, and I apologetically confess I first thought his interest in me arose from material objects. I wronged that man in thought, as I have many others, for one night, about 11 p.m., I heard a pawing at the shutters—my African friends don't knock. I got up and opened the door, and there he was. I made some observations, which I regret now, about tobacco at that time of night, and he said, "No. You be big man, suppose pusson sick?" I acknowledged the soft impeachment. "Pusson sick too much; pusson live for die. You fit for come?" "Fit," said I. "Suppose you come,

you no fit to talk?" said he. "No fit," said I, with a shrewd notion it was one of my Portuguese friends who was ill and who did not want a blazing blister on, a thing that was inevitable if you called in the local regular white medical man, so, picking up a medicine-case, I went out into the darkness with my darker friend. After getting outside the closed ground he led the way towards the forest, and I thought it was some one sick at the Roman Catholic mission. On we went down the path that might go there; but when we got to where you turn off for it, he took no heed, but kept on, and then away up over a low hill and down into deeper forest still, I steering by his white cloth. But Africa is an alarming place to walk about in at night, both for a witch doctor who believes in all his local forest devils, and a lady who believes in all the local material ones, so we both got a good deal chipped and frayed and frightened one way and another; but nothing worse happened than our walking up against a python, which had thoughtfully festooned himself across the path, out of the way of ground ants, to sleep off a heavy meal. My eminent friend, in the inky darkness and his hurry to reach his patient, failed to see this, and went fair up against it. I, being close behind, did ditto. Then my leader ducked under the excited festoon and went down the path at headlong speed, with me after him, alike terrified at losing sight of his guiding cloth and at the python, whom we heard going away into the bush with that peculiar-sounding crackle a big snake gives when he is badly hurried.

Finally we reached a small bush village, and on the ground before one of the huts was the patient extended, surrounded by unavailing, wailing women. He was suffering from a disease common in West Africa, but amenable

to treatment by European drugs, which I gave to the medical man, who gave them to his patient with proper incantations and a few little things of his own that apparently did not hinder their action. As soon as the patient had got relief, my friend saw me home, and when we got in, I said, Why did you do this, that and the other, as is usual with me, and he sat down, looked far away, and talked for an hour, softly, wordily and gently; and the gist of what that man talked was Goethe's *Prometheus*. I recognised it after half an hour, and when he had done, said, "You got that stuff from a white man." "No, sir," he said, "that no be white man fash, that be country fash, white man no fit to savee our fash." "Aren't they, my friend?" I said; and we parted for the night, I the wiser for it, he the richer.

Now, I pray you, do not think I am saying that there is a "wisdom religion" in Fetish, or anything like that, or that Fetish priests are Spinozas and Goethes—far from it. All that it seems to me to be is a perfectly natural view of Nature, and one that, if you take it up with no higher form of mind in you than a shrewd, logical one alone, will, if you carry it out, lead you necessarily to paint a white chalk rim round one eye, eat your captive, use Woka incantations for diseases, and dance and howl all night repeatedly, to the awe of your fellow-believers, and the scandal of Mohammedan gentlemen who have a revealed religion.

Moreover, the mind-form which gets hold of this truth that is in all things, makes a great difference in the form in which the religion works out. For instance, to a superficial observer, it would hardly seem possible that a Persian and a Mahdist were followers of the same religion, or that a Spaniard and an English Broad Churchman were so. And

yet it seems to me that it is only this class of difference that exists between the African, the Brahmanist, and the Shintoist.

Another and more fundamental point to be considered is the influence of physical environment on religions, particularly these Nature religions.

The Semitic mind, which had never been kept quite in its proper place by Natural difficulties, gave to man in the scheme of Creation a pre-eminence that deeply influences Europeans, who have likewise not been kept in their place owing to the environments of the temperate zone. On the other hand, the African race has had about the worst set of conditions possible to bring out the higher powers of man. He has been surrounded by a set of terrific natural phenomena, combined with a good food supply and a warm and equable climate. These things are not enough in themselves to account for his low-culture condition, but they are factors that must be considered. Then, undoubtedly, the nature of the African's mind is one of the most important points. It may seem a paradox to say of people who are always seeing visions that they are not visionaries ; but they are not.

The more you know the African, the more you study his laws and institutions, the more you must recognise that the main characteristic of his intellect is logical, and you see how in all things he uses this absolutely sound but narrow thought-form. He is not a dreamer nor a doubter ; everything is real, very real, horribly real to him. It is impossible for me to describe it clearly, but the quality of the African mind is strangely uniform. This may seem strange to those who read accounts of wild and awful ceremonials, or of the African's terror at white man's things ; but I

believe you will find all people experienced in dealing with uncultured Africans will tell you that this alarm and brief wave of curiosity is merely external, for the African knows the moment he has time to think it over, what that white man's thing really is, namely, either a white man's Juju or a devil.

It is this power of being able logically to account for everything that is, I believe, at the back of the tremendous permanency of Fetish in Africa, and the cause of many of the relapses into it by Africans converted to other religions; it is also the explanation of the fact that white men who live in districts where death and danger are everyday affairs, under a grim pall of boredom, are liable to believe in Fetish, though ashamed of so doing. For the African, whose mind has been soaked in Fetish during his early most impressionable years, the voice of Fetish is almost irresistible when affliction comes on him. Sudden dangers or terror he can face with his new religion, because he is not quick at thinking. But give him time to think when under the hand of adversity, and the old explanation that answered it all comes back. I know no more distressing thing than to see an African convert brought face to face with that awful thing we are used to, the problem of an omnipotent God and a suffering world. This does not worry the African convert until it hits him personally in grief and misery. When it does, and he turns and calls upon the God he has been taught will listen, pity and answer, his use of what the scoffers at the converted African call "catch phrases" is horribly heartrending to me, for I know how real, terribly real, the whole thing is to him, and I therefore see the temptation to return to those old gods—gods from whom he never expected pity, presided

over by a god that does not care. All that he had to do with them was not to irritate them, to propitiate them, to buy their services when wanted, and, above all, to dodge and avoid them, while he fought it out and managed devils at large. Risky work, but a man is as good as a devil any day if he only takes proper care; and even if any devil should get him unaware—kill him bodily—he has the satisfaction of knowing he will have the power to make it warm for that devil when they meet on the other side.

There is something alluring in this, I think, to any make of human mind, but particularly so to the logical, intensely human one possessed by the West African. Therefore, when wearied and worn out by confronting things that he cannot reconcile, and disappointed by unanswered prayers, he turns back to his old belief entirely, or modifies the religion he has been taught until it fits in with Fetish, and is gradually absorbed by it.

It is often asked whether Christianity or Mohammedanism is to possess Africa—as if the choice of Fate lay between these two things alone. I do not think it is so, at least it is not wise for a mere student to ignore the other thing in the affair, Fetish, which is as it were a sea wherein all things suffer a sea change. For remember it is not Christianity alone that becomes tinged with Fetish, or gets engulfed and dominated by it. Islam, when it strikes the true heart of Africa, the great Forest Belt region, fares little better though it is more recent than Christianity, and though it is preached by men who know the make of the African mind. Islam is in its blüth-period now in all the open parts, even on the desert regions of Africa from its Mediterranean shore to below the Equator, but so far it has beaten up against the Forest Belt like a sea on a sand beach. It has

crossed the Forest Belt by the Lakes, it has penetrated it in channels, but in those channels the waters of Islam are, recent as their inroad there is, brackish.

Therefore I make no pretence at prophesying which of these great revealed religions will ultimately possess Africa; but it is an interesting point to notice what has been the reason of the great power of immediate appeal to the African which they both possess.

The African has a great over-God, and below him lesser spirits, including man; but the African has not in West Africa, nor so far as I have been able to ascertain elsewhere in the whole Continent, a God-man, a thing that directly connects man with the great over-God. This thing appeals to the African when it is presented to him by Christianity and Islam.

It is, I am quite aware, not doctrinally true to say that Islam offers him a God-man, nevertheless in Mohammed practically it does so, and that too in a more easily believable form—by easily I do not mean that it is necessarily true. Moreover it minimises the danger of death in a more definite way, more in keeping with his own desires, and it is more reconcilable with his conscience in the treatment of life as he has to live it. Most of the higher class Africans are traders. Islam gives an easier, clearer line of rectitude to a trader than its great rival in Africa—under African conditions.

There are many who will question whether conscience is a sufficiently large factor in an African mind for us to think of taking it into account, but whether you call it conscience, or religious bent, or fear, the factor is a large one. An African cannot say, as so many Europeans evidently easily can, "Oh, that is all right from a religious point of

view, but one must be practical, you know"; and it is this factor that makes me respect the African deeply and sympathise with him, for I have this same unmanageable hindersome thing in my own mind, which you can call anything you like; I myself call it honour. Now conscience when conditioned by Christianity is an exceedingly difficult thing for a trader to manage satisfactorily to himself. A mass of compromises have to be made with the world, and a man who is always making compromises gets either sick of them or sick of the thing that keeps on nagging at him about them, or he becomes merely gaseous-minded all round. There are some few in all races of men who can think comfortably

> "That conscience, like a restive horse,
> Will stumble if you check his course,
> But ride him with an easy rein,
> And rub him down with worldly gain,
> He'll carry you through thick and thin,
> Safe, although dirty, 'till you win,"

but such men are in Africa a very small minority, and so it falls out that most men engaged in trade revert to Fetish, or become lax as Church members, or embrace Islam.

I think, if you will consider the case, you will see that the workability of Islam is one of the chief reasons of its success in Africa. It is, from many African points of view, a most inconvenient religion, with its Rahmadhizan, bound every now and again to come in the height of the dry season; its restrictions on alcoholic drinks and gambling; but, on the whole it is satisfying to the African conscience. Moreover, like Christianity, it lifts man into a position of paramount importance in Creation. He is the thing God made the rest for. I have often heard Africans say, "It does a man good to know God loves him; it makes him proud too much."

Well, at any rate it is pleasanter than Fetish, where man, in company with a host of spirits, is fighting for his own hand, in an arena before the gods, eternally.

We will now turn to the consideration of the status of the human soul in pure Fetish, that is to say in Fetish that is common to all the different schools of West African Fetishism.

What strikes a European when studying it is the lack of gaps between things. To the African there is perhaps no gap between the conception of spirit and matter, animate or inanimate. It is all an affair of grade—not of essential difference in essence. At the head of existence are those beings who can work without using matter, either as a constant associate or as an occasional tool—do it all themselves, as an African would say. Beneath this grade there are many grades of spirits, who occasionally or habitually, as in the case of the human grade, are associated with matter, and at the lower end of the scale is what we call matter, but which I believe the West African regards as the same sort of stuff as the rest, only very low—so low that practically it doesn't matter; but it is spirits, the things that cause all motion, all difficulties, dangers and calamities, that do matter and must be thought about, for they are *real* things whether "they live for thing" or no.

The African and myself are also in a fine fog about form, but I will spare you that point, for where that thing comes from, often so quickly and silently, and goes, often so quickly and silently, too, under our eyes, everlastingly, that thing on which we all so much depend at every moment of our lives, that thing we are quite as conscious of as light and darkness, heat or cold, yet which makes a thing no heavier

in one shape than in another,—is altogether too large a subject to touch on now. Yet, remember it is a most important part of practical Fetish, for on it depends divination and heaps of such like matters, that are parts of both the witch doctor and the Fetish priest's daily work.

One of the fundamental doctrines of Fetish is that the connection of a certain spirit with a certain mass of matter, a material object, is not permanent; the African will point out to you a lightning-stricken tree and tell you that its spirit has been killed; he will tell you when the cooking pot has gone to bits that it has lost its spirit; if his weapon fails it is because some one has stolen or made sick its spirit by means of witchcraft. In every action of his daily life he shows you how he lives with a great, powerful spirit world around him. You will see him before starting out to hunt or fight rubbing medicine into his weapons to strengthen the spirits within them, talking to them the while; telling them what care he has taken of them, reminding them of the gifts he has given them, though those gifts were hard for him to give, and begging them in the hour of his dire necessity not to fail him. You will see him bending over the face of a river talking to its spirit with proper incantations, asking it when it meets a man who is an enemy of his to upset his canoe or drown him, or asking it to carry down with it some curse to the village below which has angered him, and in a thousand other ways he shows you what he believes if you will watch him patiently.

It is a very important point in the study of pure Fetish to gain a clear conception of this arrangement of things in grades. As far as I have gone I think I may say fourteen classes of spirits exist in Fetish. Dr. Nassau of Gaboon

thinks that the spirits commonly affecting human affairs can be classified fairly completely into six classes.[1]

Regarding the Fetish view of the state and condition of the human soul there are certain ideas that I think I may safely say are common to the various cults of Fetish, both Negro and Bantu, in Western Africa. Firstly, the class of spirits that are human souls always remain human souls. They do not become deified, nor do they sink in grade. I am aware that here I am on dangerous ground so I am speaking carefully.[2] An eminent authority, when criticising my statements,[3] dwelt upon their heterodoxy on this point, saying however, "We may throw out the conjecture that in remote and obscure West Africa men do not reach the necessary pitch of renown for mighty deeds or sanctity that qualifies them in larger countries for elevation after death to high places among recognised divinities."

This conjecture I quite accept as an explanation of the non-deification of human beings in West Africa, and I think, taken in conjunction with the grade conception, it fairly explains why West Africa has not what undoubtedly other regions of the world have in their religions, deified ancestors.

After having had my attention drawn to the strangeness of this non-deification of ancestors, I did my best to work the subject out in order to see if by any chance I had badly observed it. I consulted the accounts of West African religions given by Labat, Bosman, Bastian and

[1] See *Travels in West Africa*, by M. H. Kingsley. Macmillan & Co. 1897.

[2] For further details see *Travels in West Africa*, p. 444.

[3] "Origins and Interpretations of Primitive Religions." *Edinburgh Review*, July, 1897, p. 219.

Ellis, and to my great pleasure found that the three first said nothing against my statements, and that Sir A. B. Ellis had himself said the same thing in his *Ewe Speaking People*. Moreover, I sent a circular written on this point to people in West Africa whom I knew had opportunities of knowing the facts as at present existing,—the answers were unanimous with Ellis and myself.

Nevertheless, mind, you will find something that looks like worship of ancestors in West Africa. Only it is no more worship, properly so called, than our own deference to our living, elderly, and influential relations.

In almost all Western African districts (it naturally does not show clearly in those where reincarnation is believed to be the common and immediate lot of all human spirits) is a class of spirits called "the well disposed ones," and this class is clearly differentiated from "them," the generic name used for non-human spirits. These "well disposed ones" are ancestors, and they do what they can to benefit their particular village or family, acting in conjunction with the village or family Fetish, who is not a human spirit, nor an ancestor. But the things given to ancestors are gifts, not in the proper sense of the word sacrifices, for the well disposed ones are not gods even of the rank of a Sasabonsum or an Ombuiri.

In an extremely interesting answer to my inquiries that I received from Mr. J. H. Batty, of Cape Coast, who had kindly submitted my questions to a native gentleman well versed in affairs, the statement regarding ancestors is, "The people believe that the spirits of their departed relations exercise a guardian care over them, and they will frequently stand over the graves of their deceased friends and

invoke their spirits to protect them and their children from harm. It is imagined that the spirit lingers about the house some time after death. If the children are ill the illness is ascribed to the spirit of the deceased mother having embraced them. Elderly women are often heard to offer up a kind of prayer to the spirit of a departed parent, begging it either to go to its rest, or to protect the family by keeping off evil spirits, instead of injuring the children or other members of the family by its touch. The ghosts of departed enemies are considered by the people as bad spirits, who have power to injure them."

In connection with this fear of the ancestor's ghost hurting members of its own family, particularly children, I may remark it has several times been carefully explained to me that this "touching" comes not from malevolence, but from loneliness and the desire to have their company. A sentimental but inconvenient desire that the living human cannot give in to perpetually, though big men will accede to their ancestor's desire for society by killing off people who may serve or cheer him. This desire for companionship is of course immensely greater in the spirit that is not definitely settled in the society of spiritdom, and it is therefore more dangerous to its own belongings, in fact to all living society, while it is hanging about the other side of the grave, but this side of Hades. Thus I well remember a delicious row that arose primarily out of trade matters, but which caused one family to yell at another family divers remarks, ending up with the accusation, "You good-for-nothing illegitimate offspring of house lizards, you don't bury your ditto ditto dead relations, but leave them knocking about anyhow, a curse to Calabar." Naturally therefore the spirit of a dead enemy is feared because it would touch for the purpose of

getting spirit slaves; therefore it follows that powerful ancestors are valued when they are on the other side, for they can keep off the dead enemies. A great chief's spirit is a thoroughly useful thing for a village to keep going, and in good order, for it conquered those who are among the dead with it, and can keep them under, keep them from aiding their people in the fights between its living relations and itself and them, with its slave spirit army. I ought to say that it is customary for the living to send the dead out ahead of the army, to bear the brunt in the first attack.

Ancestor-esteem you will find at its highest pitch in West Africa under the school of Fetish that rules the Tshi and Ewe peoples. Ellis gives you a full description of it for Ashanti and Dahomey.[1] The next district going down coast is the Yoruba one; but Yoruba has been so long under the influence of Mahometanism that its Fetish, judging from Ellis's statement in his *Yoruba Speaking People*, is deeply tinged with it. I have no personal acquaintance with Yorubaland, but have no hesitation for myself in accepting his statements from the accuracy I have found them, by personal experience with Tshi and Ewe people, to possess. Below Yoruba comes a district, the Oil Rivers, where, alas, Ellis did not penetrate, and where no ethnologist, unless you will graciously extend the term to me, has ever cautiously worked.

In this district you have a school where reincarnation is strongly believed in, a different school of Fetish to that of Tshi and Ewe, a class of human ghosts called the well-disposed ones. And these are ancestors undoubtedly. They do not show up clearly in those districts where reincarna-

[1] *The Tshi Speaking, Ewe Speaking and Yoruba Speaking People of West Africa.*—A. B. Ellis.

tion is believed to be the common lot of all human souls. Nevertheless, they are clear enough even there, as I will presently attempt to explain.

These ancestor spirits have things given to them for their consolation and support, and in return they do what they can to benefit and guard their own villages and families. Nevertheless, the things given to the well-disposed ones are not as things sacrificed to gods. Nor are the well-disposed ones gods, even of the grade of a Sasabonsum or an Ombuiri. It is a low down thing to dig up your father—i.e., open his grave and take away the things in it that have been given him. It will get you cut by respectable people, and rude people when there is a market-place row on will mention it freely ; but it won't bring on a devastating outbreak of small-pox in the whole district.

CHAPTER VI

SCHOOLS OF FETISH

Wherein the student, thinking things may be made clearer if it be perceived that there are divers schools of Fetish, discourses on the schools of West African religious thought.

As I have had occasion to refer to schools of Fetish, and as that is a term of my own, I must explain why I use it, and what I mean by it, in so far as I am able. When travelling from district to district you cannot fail to be struck by the difference in character of the native religion you are studying. My own range on the West Coast is from Sierra Leone to Loanda; and here and there in places such as the Oil Rivers, the Ogowe, and the Lower Congo, I have gone inland into the heart of what I knew to be particularly rich districts for an ethnologist. I make no pretence to a thorough knowledge of African Fetish in all its schools, but I feel sure no wandering student of the subject in Western Africa can avoid recognising the existence of at least four distinct forms of development of the Fetish idea. They have, every one of them, the underlying idea I have attempted to sketch as pure Fetish when speaking of the position of the human soul; and yet they differ. And I believe much of the confusion which is supposed to exist in African religious ideas is a confusion

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FANTEE NATIVES OF THE GOLD COAST.]

only existing in the minds of cabinet ethnologists from a want of recognition of the fact of the existence of these schools.

For example, suppose you take a few facts from Ellis and a few from Bastian and mix, and call the mixture West African religion, you do much the same sort of thing as if you took bits from Mr. Spurgeon's works, and from those of some eminent Jesuit and of a sound Greek churchman, and mixed them and labelled it European religion. The bits would be all right in themselves, but the mixture would be a quaint affair.

As far as my present knowledge of the matter goes, I should state that there were four main schools of West African Fetish: (1) the Tshi and Ewe school, Ellis' school; (2) the Calabar school; (3) the Mpongwe school; (4) Nkissism or the Fjort school. Subdivisions of these schools can easily be made, but I only make the divisions on the different main objects of worship, or more properly speaking, the thing each school especially endeavours to secure for man. The Tshi and Ewe school is mainly concerned with the preservation of life; the Calabar school with attempting to enable the soul successfully to pass through death; the Mpongwe school with the attainment of material prosperity; while the school of Nkissi is mainly concerned with the worship of the mystery of the power of Earth—Nkissi-nsi. You will find these divers things worshipped, or, rather, I would say cultivated, in all the schools of Fetish, but in certain schools certain ideas are predominant. Look at Srahmantin of the Tshi people, and at Nzambi of the Fjort. Both these ladies know where the animals go to drink, what they say to each other, where their towns are, and what not; also they both know what

the forest says to the wind and the rain, and all the forests' own small talk in the bargain, and, therefore, also the inner nature of all these things; and both, like other ladies, I have heard prefer gentlemen's society. Women they have a tendency to be hard on, but either Srahmantin or Nzambi think nothing of taking up a man's time, making him neglect his business or his family affairs, or both together, by keeping him in the bush for a month or so at a time, teaching him things about medicines, and finally sending him back into town in so addlepated a condition that for months he hardly knows who he exactly is. When he comes round, however, if he has any sense, he sets up in business as a medical man; sometimes, however, he just remains merely crackey. Such a man was my esteemed Kefalla.

But look how different under different schools is the position of Srahmantin and Nzambi. Srahmantin is only propitiated by doctors and hunters; by all respectable, busy, family men forced to go through forests, she is simply dreaded, while Nzambi, the great Princess, entirely dominates the whole school of Nkissism.

From what cause or what series of causes the predominance of these different things has come, I do not know, unless it be from different natural environment and different race. It is certainly not a mere tribal affair, for there are many different tribes under each school. For example, I do not think you need make more than a subdivision between the Tshi, the Ga or Ogi and the Ewe peoples' Fetish, nor more than a subdivision between those of the Eboes and the Ibbibios, or those of the Fjort and Mussurongoes; but we want more information before it would be quite safe to dogmatise.

It is impossible in the present state of our knowledge to give exact geographical limits of the different schools of Fetish, and I therefore only sketch their geographical distribution in Western Africa, from Sierra Leone to Loanda, hoping thereby to incite further research.

Sierra Leone and its adjacent districts have not been studied by an ethnologist. We have only scattered information regarding the religion there; and unfortunately the observations we have on it mainly bear on the operations of the secret societies, which in these regions have attained to much power, and are usually though erroneously grouped under the name of Poorah. Poorah, like all secret societies, is intensely interesting, for it is the manifestation of the law form of Fetish; but secret societies are pure Fetish, and common to all districts. All that we can gather from the scattered observations on the rest of the Fetish in this region is that it is allied to the Fetish school of the Tshi-speaking people.

Next to this unobserved district, we come to the well-observed districts of the Tshi, Ewe, and Yoruba-speaking people—Ellis's region.

It may seem unwise for me to attempt to group these three together and call them one school, because from this one district we have two distinct cults of Fetish in the West Indies, Voudou and Obeah (Tchanga and Wanga). Voudou itself is divided into two sects, the white and the red—the first, a comparatively harmless one, requiring only the sacrifice of, at the most, a white cock or a white goat, whereas the red cult only uses the human sacrifice—the goat without horns. Obeah, on the other hand, kills only by poison—does not show the blood at all. And there is another important difference between Voudou and Obeah,

and that is that Voudou requires for the celebration of its rites a priestess and a priest. Obeah can be worked by either alone, and is not tied to the presence of the snake. Both these cults have sprung from slaves imported from Ellis's district, Obeah from slaves bought at Koromantin mainly, and Voudou from those bought at Dahomey. Nevertheless, it seems to me these good people have differentiated their religion in the West Indies considerably; for example, in Obeah the spider (*anansi*) has a position given it equal to that of the snake in Voudou. Now the spider is all very well in West Africa; round him there has grown a series of most amusing stories, always to be told through the nose, and while you crawl about; but to put him on a plane with the snake in Dahomey is absurd; his equivalent there is the turtle, also a focus for many tales, only more improper tales, and not half so amusing.

The true importance and status of the snake in Dahomey is a thing hard to fix. Personally I believe it to be merely a case of especial development of a local ju-ju. We all know what the snake signifies, and instances of its attaining a local eminence occur elsewhere. At Creek Town, in Calabar, and Brass River it is more than respected. It is an accidental result of some bit of history we have lost, like the worship of the crocodile at Dixcove and in the Lower Congo. Whereas it is clear that the general respect, amounting to seeming worship, of the leopard is another affair altogether, for the leopard is the great thing in all West African forests, and forests and surf are the great things in Western Africa—the lines of perpetual danger to the life of man.

But there is a remarkable point that you cannot fail to notice in the Fetish of these three divisions of true Negro

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YORUBA.

Fetish studied by Ellis, namely, that what is one god in Yoruba you get as several gods exercising one particular function in Dahomey, as hundreds of gods on the Gold Coast. Moreover, all these gods in all these districts have regular priests and priestesses in dozens, while below Yoruba regular priests and priestesses are rare. There the officials of the law societies abound, and there are Fetish men, but these are different people to the priests of Bohorwissi and Tando.

I do not know Yoruba land personally, but have had many opportunities of inquiring regarding its Fetish from educated and uneducated natives of that country whom I have met down Coast as traders and artisans. Therefore, having found nothing to militate against Ellis's statements, I accept them for Yoruba as for Dahomey and the Gold Coast; and my great regret is that his careful researches did not extend down into the district below Yoruba—the district I class under the Calabar school—more particularly so because the districts he worked at are all districts where there has been a great and long-continued infusion of both European and Mohammedan forms of thought, owing to the four-hundred-year-old European intercourse on the seaboard, and the even older and greater Mohammedan influence from the Western Soudan; whereas below these districts you come to a region of pure Negro Fetish that has undergone but little infusion of alien thought.

Whether or no to place Benin with Yoruba or with Calabar is a problem. There is, no doubt, a very close connection between it and Yoruba. There is also no doubt that Benin was in touch, even as late as the seventeenth century, with some kingdom of the higher culture away in the interior. It may have been Abyssinia, or it may have

been one of the cultured states that the chaos produced by the Mohammedan invasion of the Soudan destroyed. In our present state of knowledge we can only conjecture, I venture to think, idly, until we know more. The only thing that is certain is that Benin was influenced as is shown by its art development. Benin practically broke up long before Ashantee or Dahomey, for, as Proyart[1] remarks, "many small kingdoms or native states which at the present day share Africa among them were originally provinces dependent on other kingdoms, the particular governors of which usurped the sovereignty." Benin's north-western provinces seem to have done this, possibly with the assistance of the Mohammedanised people who came down to the seaboard seeking the advantages of white trade; and Benin became isolated in its forest swamps, cut off from the stimulating influence of successful wars, and out of touch with the expanding influence of commerce, and devoted its attention too much to Fetish matters to be healthy for itself or any one who fell in with it. It is an interesting point in this connection to observe that we do not find in the accounts given by the earlier voyagers to Benin city anything like the enormous sacrifice of human life described by visitors to it of our own time. Other districts round Calabar, Bonny, Opobo, and so on, have human sacrifice as well, but they show no signs of being under Benin in trade matters, in which Benin used to be very strict when it had the chance. In fact, whatever respect they had for Benin was a sentimental one, such as the King of Kongo has, and does not take the practical form of paying taxes.

[1] *History of Loango*, by the Abbé Proyart, 1776. Pinkerton, vol. xvi., p. 587.

The extent of the direct influence of Benin away into the forest belt to the east and south I do not think at any time was great. Benin was respected because it was regarded as possessing a big Fetish and great riches. In recent years it was regarded by people discontented with white men as their great hope, from its power to resist these being greater than their own. Nevertheless, the adjacent kingdom of Owarie (Warri), even in the sixteenth century, was an independent kingdom. So different was its Fetish from that of Benin that Warri had not then, and has not to this day, human sacrifice in its religious observances, only judicial and funeral killings.

Considering how very easily Africans superficially adopt the religious ideas of alien people with whom they have commercial intercourse, we must presume that the people who imported the art of working in metals into Benin also imported some of their religion. The relics of religion, alien to Fetish, that show in Benin Fetish are undoubtedly Christian. Whether these relics are entirely those of the Portuguese Roman Catholic missions, or are not also relics of some earlier Christian intercourse with Western Soudan Christianised states existing prior to the Mohammedan invasion of Northern Africa, is again a matter on which we require more information. But just as I believe some of the metal articles found in Benin to be things made in Birmingham, some to be old Portuguese, some to be native castings, copies of things imported from that unknown inland state, and some to be the original inland state articles themselves, so do I believe the relics of Christianity in the Fetish to be varied in origin, all alike suffering absorption by the native Fetish.

There is no doubt that up to the last twenty years the

three great Fetish kings in Western Africa were those of Ashantee, Dahomey, and Benin. Each of these kings was alike believed by the whole of the people to have great Fetish power in his own locality. In the time of which we have no historical record—prior to the visits of the first white voyagers in the fifteenth century—there is traditional record of the King of Benin fighting with his cousin of Dahomey. Possibly Dahomey beat him badly; anyhow something went seriously wrong with Benin as a territorial kingdom, before its discovery by modern Europe.

I now turn to the Fetish of the Oil Rivers which I have called the Calabar school. The predominance of the belief there in reincarnation seems to me sufficient to separate it from the Gold Coast and Dahomey Fetish. Funeral customs, important in all Negro Fetish, become in the Calabar school exceedingly so. A certain amount of care anywhere is necessary to successfully establish the human soul after death, for the human soul strongly objects to leaving material pleasures and associations and going to, at best, an uninteresting under-world; but when you have not only got to send the soul down, but to bring it back into the human form again, and not any human form at that, but one of its own social status and family, the thing becomes more complicated still; and to do it so engrosses human attention, and so absorbs human wealth, that you do not find under the Calabar school a multitude of priest-served gods as you do in Dahomey and on the Gold Coast. Mind you, so far as I could make out while in the Calabar districts myself, the equivalents of those same gods, were quite believed in; but they were neglected in a way that would have caused them in Dahomey, where they have been taught to fancy themselves to wreck the place. Not only

is care taken to send a soul down, but means are taken to see whether or no it has duly returned; for keeping a valuable soul, like that of a great Fetish proficient who could manage outside spirits, or that of a good trader, is a matter of vital importance to the prosperity of the Houses, so when such a soul has left the House in consequence of some sad accident or another, or some vile witchcraft, the babies that arrive to the House are closely watched. Assortments of articles belonging to deceased members of the house are presented to it, and then, according to the one it picks out, it is decided who that baby really is—See, Uncle so-and-so knows his own pipe, &c.—and I have often heard a mother reproaching a child for some fault say, "Oh, we made a big mistake when we thought you were so-and-so." I must say I think the absence of the idea of the deification of ancestors in West Africa shows up particularly strongly in the Calabar school, for herein you see so clearly that the dead do not pass into a higher, happier state—that the soul separate from the body is only a part of that thing we call a human being; and in West Africa the whole is greater than a part, even in this matter.

The pathos of the thing, when you have grasped the underlying idea, is so deep that the strangeness of it passes away, and you almost forget to hate the horrors of the slaughter that hang round Oil River funeral customs, or, at any rate, you understand the tenacity you meet with here of the right to carry out killing at funerals, a greater tenacity than confronted us in Gold Coast or Dahomey regions, because a different idea is involved in the affair. On the Gold Coast, for example, you can substitute wealth for the actual human victim, because with wealth the dead soul could, after all, make itself comfortable

in Srahmandazi, but not so in the Rivers. Without slaves, wives, and funds, how can the dead soul you care for speak with the weight of testimony of men as to its resting place or position? Rolls of velvet or satin, and piles of manillas or doubloons alone cannot speak; besides, they may have been stolen stuff, and the soul you care for may be put down by the authorities as a mere thieving slave, a sort of mere American gold bug trying to pass himself off as a duke—or a descendant of General Washington—which would lead to that soul being disgraced and sent back in a vile form. Think how you yourself, if in comfortable circumstances, belonging to a family possessing wealth and power, would like father, mother, sister, or brother of yours who by this change of death had just left these things, to go down through death, and come back into life in a squalid slum!

We meet in this school, however, with a serious problem —namely, what does become of dead chiefs? It is a point I will not dogmatise on, but it certainly looks as if the Calabar under-world was a most aristocratic spot, peopled entirely by important chiefs and the retinues sent down with them—by no means having the fine mixed society of Srahmandazi.

The Oil River deceased chief is clearly kept as a sort of pensioner. The chief who succeeds him in his headship of the House is given to "making his father" annually. It is not necessarily his real father that he makes, but his predecessor in the headmanship—a slave succeeding to a free man would "make his father" to the dead free man, and so on. This function undoubtedly consists in sending his predecessor a big subsidy for his support, and consolation in the shape of slaves and goods. I may as well own I have

long had a dark suspicion regarding this matter—a suspicion as to where those goods went. Their proper destination, of course, should be the under-world. Thither undoubtedly on the Gold Coast they would go; but when sent in the Rivers I do not think they go so far. In fact, to make a clean breast of it, I do not believe big chiefs are properly buried in the Oil Rivers at all. I think they are, for political purposes, kept hanging about outside life, but not inside death, by their diplomatic successors. I feel emboldened to say this by what my friend, Major Leonard, Vice-Consul of the Niger Coast Protectorate, recently told me. When he was appointed Vice-Consul, and was introducing himself to his chiefs in this capacity, one chief he visited went aside to a deserted house, opened the door, and talked to somebody inside; there was not any one in material form inside, only the spirit of his deceased predecessor, and all the things left just as they were when he died; the live chief was telling the dead chief that the new Consul was come, &c.

The reason, that is the excuse, for this seemingly unprincipled conduct in not properly burying the chief, so that he may be reincarnated to a complete human form, lies in the fact that he would be a political nuisance to his successor if he came back promptly; therefore he is kept waiting.

From first-class native informants I have had fragments of accounts of making-father ceremonies. Particularly interesting have been their accounts of what the live chief says to the dead one. Much of it, of course, is, for diplomatic reasons, not known outside official circles. But the general tone of these communications is well known to be of a nature to discourage the dead chief from returning,

and to reconcile him to his existing state. Things are not what they were here. The price of oil is down, women are ten times more frivolous, slaves ten times more trying, white Consul men abound, also their guns are more deadly than of old, this new Consul looks worse than the last, there is nothing but war and worry for a chief nowadays. The whole country is going to the dogs financially and domestically, in fact, and you are much better off where you are. Then come petitions for such help as the ghost chief and his ghost retinue can give.

This, I think, explains why chiefs' funeral customs in the Rivers differ in kind, not merely in grade, from those of big trade boys or other important people, and also accounts for their repetition at intervals. Big trade boys, and the slaves and women sent down with them, return to a full human form more or less promptly; mere low grade slaves, slaves that cannot pull a canoe, *i.e.*, provide a war canoe for the service of the House out of their own private estate, are not buried at all—they are thrown away, unless they have a mother who will bury them. They will come back again all right as slaves, but then that is all they are fit for.

Then we have left very interesting sections of the community to consider from a funeral rite point of view—namely, those in human form who are not, strictly speaking, human beings, and those who, though human, have committed adultery with spirits—women who bear twins or who die in child-birth. These sinners, I may briefly remark, are neither buried nor just thrown away; they are, as far as possible, destroyed. But with the former class the matter is slightly different. Children, for example, that arrive with ready cut teeth, will in a strict family be killed or thrown away in the bush to die as they please; but the

feeling against them is not really keen. They may, if the mother chooses to be bothered with them, be reared; but the interesting point is that any property they may acquire during life has no legal heir whatsoever. It must be dissipated, thrown away. This shows clearly that such individuals are not human, and, moreover, they are not buried nor destroyed at death; they are just thrown away. There is no particular harm in them as there is in the sin-stained twins.

The only class in West Africa I have found that are like these spirit humans is that strange class, the minstrels. I wish I knew more about these people. Were it not that Mr. F. Swanzy possesses material evidence of their existence, in the shape of the most superb song-net, I should hesitate to mention them at all. Some of my French friends, however, tell me they have seen them in Senegal, and I venture to think that region must be their headquarters. I have seen one in Accra, one in Sierra Leone, two on board steamers, and one in Buana town, Cameroon. Briefly, these are minstrels who frequent market towns, and for a fee sing stories. Each minstrel has a song-net—a strongly made net of a fishing net sort. On to this net are tied all manner and sorts of things, pythons' back bones, tobacco pipes, bits of china, feathers, bits of hide, birds' heads, reptiles' heads, bones, &c., &c., and to every one of these objects hangs a tale. You see your minstrel's net, you select an object and say how much that song. He names an exorbitant price; you haggle; no good. He won't be reasonable, say over the python bone, so you price the tobacco pipe—more haggle; finally you settle on some object and its price, and sit down on your heels and listen with rapt attention to the song, or, rather, chant. You

usually have another. You sort of dissipate in novels, in fact. I do not say it's quiet reading, because unprincipled people will come headlong and listen when you have got your minstrel started, without paying their subscription. Hence a row, unless you are, like me, indifferent to other people having a little pleasure.

These song-nets, I may remark, are not of a regulation size. I have never seen on the West Coast anything like so superb a collection of stories as Mr. Swanzy has tied on that song-net of his—Woe is me! without the translating minstrel, a cycle of dead songs that must have belonged to a West African Shakespeare. The most impressive song-net that I saw was the one at Buana. Its owner I called Homer on the spot, because his works were a terrific two. Tied on to his small net were a human hand and a human jaw bone. They were his only songs. I heard them both regardless of expense. I did not understand them, because I did not know his language; but they were fascinating things, and the human hand one had a passage in it which caused the singer to crawl on his hands and knees, round and round, stealthily looking this side and that, giving the peculiar leopard questing cough, and making the leopard mark on the earth with his doubled-up fist. Ah! that was something like a song! It would have roused a rock to enthusiasm; a civilised audience would have smothered its singer with bouquets. I—well, the headman with me had to interfere and counsel moderation in heads of tobacco.

But what I meant to say about these singers was only this. They are not buried as other people are; they are put into trees when they are dead—may be because they are "all same for one" with those singers the birds. I do not know,

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NATIVES OF GABOON.

I only hope Homer is still extant, and that some more intelligent hearer than I will meet with him.

The southern boundary of the Calabar school of Fetish lies in narrower regions than the boundary between it and Ellis's school in the north. I venture to think that this may in a measure arise from there being in the southern region the additional element of difference of race. For immediately below Calabar in the Cameroon territory the true Negro meets the Bantu. In Cameroon in the tribes of the Dualla stem we have a people speaking a Bantu language, and having a Bantu culture, yet nevertheless having a great infusion of pure Negro blood, and largely under the dominion of the true Negro thought form.

I own that of all the schools of Fetish that I know, the Calabar school is the one that fascinates me most. I like it better than Ellis's school, wherein the fate of the soul after death is a life in a shadow land, with shadows for friends, lovers, and kinsfolk, with the shadows of joys for pleasures, the shadows of quarrels for hate—a thing that at its best is inferior to the wretchedest full-life on earth. Yet this settled shadow-land of Srahmandazi or Gboohiadse is a better thing than the homeless drifting state of the soul in the school below Calabar—namely, the school I have ventured to term the Mpongwe school. To the brief consideration of this school we will now turn.

In between the strongly-marked Calabar school and the strongly-marked school of Nkissism of Loango Kacongo, and Bas Congo there exists a school plainly differing from both. This region is interesting for many reasons, chief amongst which is that it is the sea-board region of the great African Forest belt. Tribe after tribe come down into it, flourish awhile, and die, uninfluenced by Mohammedan or European

culture. The Mohammedans in Africa as aforesaid have never mastered the western region of the forest belt; and the Europeans have never, in this region between Cameroon and Loango, established themselves in force. It is undoubtedly the wildest bit of West Africa.

The dominant tribes here have, for as far back as we can get evidence—some short four hundred years—been tribes of the Mpongwe stem—the so-called noble tribes. To-day they are dying—going off the face of the earth, leaving behind them nothing to bear testimony in this world to their great ability, save the most marvellously beautiful language, the Greek of Africa, as Dr. Nassau calls it, and the impress of their more elaborate thought-form on the minds of the bush tribes that come into contact with them. Their last pupils are the great Bafangh, now supplanting them in the regions of the Bight of Panavia.

From their influence I think the school of Fetish of this region is perhaps best called the Mpongwe school, though I do not altogether like the term, because I believe the Mpongwe stem to be in origin pure Negro, and the Fetish school they have elaborated and co-ordinated is Bantu in thought-form, just as the language they have raised to so high a pitch of existence is in itself a Bantu language. Yet the Mpongwe are rulers of both these things, and they will thereby leave imprinted on the minds of their supplanters in the land the mark of their intelligence.

I have said the predominant idea in this Mpongwe school is the securing of material prosperity. That is to say this is the part of pure Fetish that receives more attention than other parts of pure Fetish in this school; but it attains to no such definite predominance as funeral rites do in the Calabar school, or the preservation of life in Ellis's school.

One might, however, quite fairly call the Mpongwe school the trade-charm school, great as trade charms are in all West African Fetish.

This lack of a predominance sufficient to dwarf other parts of pure Fetish makes the Mpongwe school particularly interesting and valuable to a student; it is a magnificent school to study your pure Fetish in, as none of it is here thrown by a predominant factor into the background of thought, and left in a neglected state.

It is of this school that you will find Dr. Nassau's classification of spirits, and all the other observations of his that I have quoted of things absolutely believed in by the natives, and also all the Mpongwe, Benga, Igalwa, Ncomi, and Fetish I have attempted to describe.[1]

It has no gods with proper priests. Human beings are here just doing their best to hold their own with the spirit world, getting spirits under their control as far as possible, and dealing with the rest of them diplomatically. This state I venture to think is Fetish in a very early form, a form through which the now elaborate true Negro Fetish must have passed before reaching its present co-ordinated state. How long ago it was when the true Negro was in this stage I will not venture to conjecture. Sir Henry Maine, of whom I am a very humble follower, says, "Nothing moves that is not Greek." This is a hard saying to accept, but the truth of it grows on you when you are studying things such as these, and you are forced to acknowledge that they at any rate have a slow rate of development—sometimes indeed it seems that there is a mere wave motion of thought among all men rising here and there when in the hands of superior tribes, like the Mpongwe for ex-

[1] *Travels in West Africa.* Fetish Chapters.

ample, to a wave crest destined on their extinction to fall again. Now and again as a storm on the sea, the impulse of a revealed religion sweeps down on to this ocean of nature philosophy, elevates it or confuses it according to the initial profundity of it. If you have ever seen the difference between a deep sea storm and an esturial storm, you will know what I mean. Yet this has nothing to do with the truth or falsity of the Fetish thought-form, but merely has a bearing on the quality of the minds that deal with it, as it must on all minds not under the influence of a revealed religion; and I now turn, in conclusion of this brief consideration of the schools of Fetish in West Africa, to the next school to the Mpongwe, namely, the school of Nkissism. I need not go into details concerning it here; you have them at your command in the two great works of Bastian, *An Expedition under Loango Küste und Besuch in San Salvador*, and in Mr. R. E. Dennett's *Folk Lore of the Fjorts*, published by the liberality of the Folk Lore Society, and also his former book, *Seven Years among the Fjorts*.[1]

The predominant feature in this school is undoubtedly the extra recognition given to the mystery of the power of the earth, Nkissi 'nsi. Here you find the earth goddess Nzambi the paramount feature in the Fetish; from her the Fetish priests have their knowledge of the proper way to manage and communicate with lower earth spirits, round her circle almost all the legends, in her lies the ultimate human hope of help and protection. Nzambi is too large a subject for us to enter into here. She is the great mother, but she is not absolute in power. She is not one of the forms of the great unheeding over-lord of gods, like

[1] Sampson Low and Co.

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FJORT NATIVES OF KACONGO AND LOANGO.

Nyankupong, or Abassi-boom; the equivalent to him, is her husband Nzambi Mpungu, among the followers of Nkissism; but the predominance given in this school to the great Princess Nzambi has had two effects that must be borne in mind in studying the region from Loango to the south bank of Congo. Firstly, it apparently led to Nzambi being confused by the natives with the Holy Virgin, when they were under the tuition of the Roman Catholic missionaries during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; hence Nzambi's cult requires to be studied with the greatest care at the present day. Secondly, partly in consequence of the native predominance given to her, and partly in the predominance she has gained from the aforesaid confusion, women have a very singular position, a superior one to that which they have in other schools; this you will see by reading the stories collected by Mr. Dennett. I will speak no further now concerning these schools of Fetish, for Nkissism is the most southern of the West African schools, its domain extending over the whole of the regions once forming the kingdom of Kongo down to Angola. Below Angola, on the West Coast, you come to the fringing zone of the Kalahi desert, and to those interesting people the Bushmen, of whose religion I am unable, with any personal experience, to speak. Below them you strike South Africa. South Africa is South Africa; West Africa is West Africa. Of the former I know nothing, of the latter alas! only a tenth part of what I should wish to know, so I return to pure Fetish and to its bearing on witchcraft.

CHAPTER VII

FETISH AND WITCHCRAFT

Wherein the student having by now got rather involved in things in general, is constrained to discourse on witchcraft and its position in West African religious thought, concluding with the conviction that Fetish is quite clear though the student has not succeeded in making it so.

NOW, here we come to a very interesting question: What is witchcraft in itself? Conversing freely with the Devil, says Christendom, firmly; and taking the Devil to mean the Spirit of Evil, I am bound to think Christendom is in a way scientifically quite right, though the accepted scientific definition of witchcraft at present is otherwise, and holds witchcraft to be conversing with Natural Science, which of course I cannot accept as the Devil. Thus I cannot reconcile the two definitions should they mean the same thing; and so I am here really in the position of being at one in opinion with the Roman Catholic missionaries of the fifteenth century, who, as soon as they laid eyes on my friend the witch-doctor, recognised him and his goings on as a mass of witchcraft, and went for the whole affair in an exceeding game way.

But let us take the accepted view, that first propounded by Sir Alfred Lyall; and I humbly beg it to be clearly understood I am only speaking of the bearing of that

view on Fetish in West Africa. I was of course fully aware of the accepted view of the innate antagonism between religion and witchcraft when I published in a deliberately scattered form some of my observations on Fetish, being no more desirous of giving a mental lead to white men than to black, but only wistful to find out what they thought of things as they are. The consequence of this action of mine has been, I fear, on the whole a rather more muddled feeling in the white mind regarding Fetish than ever heretofore existed; a feeling that, if what I said was true, (and in this matter of Fetish information no one has gainsaid the truth of it), West African religion was more perplexing than it seemed to be when regarded as a mere degraded brutal superstition or childish foolishness.

However, one distinguished critic has tackled my Fetish, and gallantly: the writer in the *Edinburgh Review*. With his remarks on our heresy regarding the deification of ancestors I have above attempted to deal, owning he is quite right—we do not believe in deified ancestors. I now pass on to his other important criticism, and again own he is quite right, and that "witchcraft and religious rites in West Africa are originally indistinguishable."[1] This is evidently a serious affair for West Africa and me, so I must deal with it carefully, and first quote my critic's words following immediately those just cited. "If this is correct there can be no doubt that such a confusion of the two ideas that in their later forms not only stand widely apart, but are always irreconcilably hostile, denotes the very lowest stage of aboriginal superstition wherever it prevails, for it has been held that, although the line between abject

[1] July, 1897, p. 221.

fetishism and witchcraft may be difficult to trace in the elementary stages, yet from the beginning a true distinction can invariably be recognised. According to this theory, the witch is more nearly allied with rudimentary science than with priestcraft, for he relies not upon prayer, worship, or propitiation of divinities, but upon his own secret knowledge and experience of the effect producible by certain tricks and mysterious devices upon the unseen powers, over whom he has obtained a sort of command. Instead of serving like a priest these powers, he is enabled by his art to make them serve him, and it is for this reason that his practices very soon become denounced and detested by the priesthood."

Now there are many interesting points to be considered in West Africa bearing on the above statement of Sir Alfred Lyall's theory of the nature of witchcraft,—points which I fancy, if carefully considered, would force upon us the strange conclusion that, accepting this theory as a general statement of the nature of witchcraft, there was no witchcraft whatever in West Africa, nothing having "a true distinction" in the native mind from religion. You may say there is no religion and it's all witchcraft, but this is a superficial view to take; you see the orthodox Christian view of witchcraft contains in it an element not present in the West African affair; the Christian regards the witch with hatred as one knowing good, yet choosing evil. The West African has not this choice in his mind; he has to deal with spirits who are not, any of them, up to much in the way of virtue viewed from a human standpoint. I don't say they are all what are called up here devils; a good many of them are what you might call reasonable, respectable, easy-going sort of people; some are downright bad;

in fact, I don't think it would be going too far to say that they are all downright bad if they get their tempers up or take a dislike to a man; there is not one of them beneficent to the human race at large. Nzambi is the nearest approach to a beneficent deity I have come across, and I feel she owes much of this to the confusion she profits by, and the Holy Virgin suffers from, in the regions under Nkissism; but Nzambi herself is far from morally perfect and very difficult tempered at times. You need not rely on me in this matter; take the important statement of Dr. Nassau: "Observe, these were distinctly prayers, appeals for mercy, agonising protests; but there was no praise, no love, no thanks, no confession of sin."[1] He was speaking regarding utterances made down there in the face of great afflictions and sorrow; and there was no praise, because there was no love, I fancy; no thanks because what good was done to the human being was a mere boughten thing he had paid for. No confession of sin, because the Fetish believer does not hold he lives in a state of sin, but that it is a thing he can commit now and again if he is fool enough. Sin to him not being what it is to us, a vile treason against a loving Father, but a very ill-advised act against powerful, nasty-tempered spirits. Herein you see lies one difference between the Christian and the Fetish view,—a fundamental one, that must be borne in mind.

Then in the above-quoted passage you will observe that the dislike to witchcraft is traced in a measure to the action of priesthoods. This hatred is undoubted. But witchcraft is as much hated in districts in West Africa where there are no organised priesthoods as in districts

[1] *Travels in West Africa.* (Macmillan, 1897, p. 453.)

where there are—in the regions under the Calabar and Mpongwe schools, for example, where the father of the house is the true priest to the family, where what looks like a priesthood, but which is a law god-cult only—the secret society—is the dominant social thing. Now this law god-cult affair, Purroh, Oru, Egbo, Ukukiwe, etc., etc., call it what you please, it's all the same thing, is not the organisation that makes war on witchcraft in West Africa. It deals with it now and then, if it is brought under its official notice; but it is not necessary that this should be done; summary methods are used with witches. It just appeals at once to ordeal, any one can claim it. You can claim it, and administer it yourself to yourself, if you are the accused party and in a hurry. A. says to you, "You're a witch." "I'm not," you ejaculate. I take the bean; down it goes; you're sick or dead long before the elaborate mechanism of the law society has heard of the affair. Of course, if you want to make a big palaver and run yourself and your accuser into a lot of expense you can call in the society; but you needn't. From this and diversthings like it I do not think the hatred of witchcraft in West Africa at large has anything originally to do with the priesthood. You will say, but there is the hatred of witchcraft in West Africa. You have only to shout "*Ifot*" at a man or woman in Calabar, or "*Ndo tchi*" in Fjort-land, and the whole population, so good-tempered the moment before, is turned bloodthirsty. Witches are torn to bits, destroyed in every savage way, when the ordeal has conclusively proved their guilt—mind you, never before. Granted; but I believe this to be just a surging up of that form of terror called hate.

I am old enough to remember the dynamite scares up here, and the Jack the Ripper incidents; then it was only

necessary for some one to call out, "Dynamiter" or "Jack the Ripper" at a fellow-citizen, and up surged our own people, all same for one with those Africans, only our people, not being so law-governed, would have shredded the accused without ordeal, had we not possessed that great factor in the formation of public virtue, the police, who intervened, carried away the accused to the ordeal—the police court—where the affair was gone into with judicial calm. Honestly, I don't believe there is the slightest mystic revulsion against witchcraft in West Africa; public feeling is always at bursting-point on witches, their goings-on are a constant danger to every peaceful citizen's life, family, property, and so on, and when the general public thinks it's got hold of one of the vermin it goes off with a bang; but it does not think for one moment that the witch is *per se* in himself a thing apart; he is just a bad man too much, who has gone and taken up with spirits for illegitimate purposes. The mere keeping of a familiar power, which under Christendom is held so vile a thing, is not so held in West Africa. Everyone does it; there is not a man, woman, or child who has not several attached spirits for help and preservation from danger and disease. It is keeping a spirit for bad purposes only that is hateful. It is one thing to have dynamite in the hand of the government or a mining company for reasonable reasons, quite another to have it in the hands of enemies to society; and such an enemy is a witch who trains the spirits over which he has got control to destroy his fellow human beings' lives and properties.

The calling in of ordeal to try the witch before destroying him has many interesting points. The African, be it granted, is tremendously under the dominion of law, and it is the law that such trials should take place before execution; but

there is also involved in it another curious fact, and that is that the spirit of the ordeal is held to be able to manage and suppress the bad spirits trained by the witch to destruction. Human beings alone can collar the witch and destroy him in an exemplary manner, but spiritual aid is required to collar the witch's devil, or it would get adrift and carry on after its owner's death. Regarding ordeal affairs I will speak when dealing with legal procedure.

Such being the West African view of witchcraft, I venture to think there are in this world divers reasons for hating witchcraft. There is the fetish one, that he is an enemy to society; there is the priesthood one, that he is a sort of quack or rival practitioner—under this head of priesthood aversion for witchcraft I think we may class the witchcraft that is merely a hovering about of the old religion which the priesthood of an imported religion are anxious to stamp out; and there is that aversion to witchcraft one might call the Protestant aversion, which arises from the feeling that it is a direct sin against God Himself. This latter feeling has been the cause of as violent a persecution of witches, witness the action of King James I. and that of the Quakers in America, as any West African has ever presented to the world. Throughout all these things the fact remains, that whether black, white, or yellow, the witch is a bad man, a murderer in the eyes of Allah as well as those of humanity.

That all witches act by means of poison alone would be too hasty a thing to say, because I think we need hardly doubt that the African is almost as liable to die from a poisonous idea put into his mind as a poisonous herb put into his food; indeed, I do not know that in West Africa we need confine ourselves to saying natives alone do this, for white men sink and die under an idea that breaks their

spirit. All the vital powers are required there to resist the depressing climate. If they are weakened seriously in any way, death is liable to ensue. The profound belief in the power of a witch causes a man who knows, say, that either a nail has been driven into an Nkiss down on the South-West coast, or the Fangaree drum beaten on him up in the Sierra Leone region, to collapse under the terror of it, and I own I can see no moral difference between the guilt of the man or woman who does these things with the intent to slay a fellow-citizen and that of one who puts bush into his chop—both mean to kill and do kill, but both methods are good West African witchcraft. The latter may seem to be an incipient form of natural science, but it seems to me—I say it humbly—that the West African incipient scientist is not the local witch, but that highly respectable gentleman or lady, the village apothecary, the *Nganga bilongo* or the *Abiabok*. The means of killing in vogue in West African witchcraft without the direct employment of poison are highly interesting, but I think it would serve no good purpose for me to give even the few I know in detail. There is one interesting point in this connection. I have said that in order to make a charm efficacious against a particular person you must have preferably some of his blood in your possession, or, failing that, some hair or nail clipping; failing these, some articles belonging intimately to him—a piece of his loin-cloth, or, under the school of Nkissi, a bit of his iron. This I believe to hold good for all true fetish charms; but we have in the Bight of Benin charms which are under the influence of a certain amount of Mohammedan ideas—for example, the deadly charms of the Kufong society. This class of charm does not require absolutely a bit of something nearly connected with the

victim, but nevertheless it cannot act at a great distance, or without the element of personal connection. Take the Fangaree charm, for example, to be found among the Mendi people, and all the neighbouring peoples who are liable to go in for Kufong.

Fangaree is the name of a small drum that is beaten by a hammer made of bamboo. The uses of this drum are wide and various, but it also gives its name to the charm, because the charm, like the drum, is beaten with a similar stick. The charm stuff itself is made of a dead man's bone, of different herbs smoked over a fire and powdered the same day, ants'-hill earth, and charcoal. This precious mixture is made into a parcel; that parcel is placed on a frame made of hamboo sticks. On the top of the charm a small live animal—an insect, I am informed, will do—is secured by a string passing over it, and the charm is fixed with wooden forks into the ground on either side. This affair is placed by the murderer close to a path the victim will pass along, and the murderer sits over it, waiting for him to come. When he comes, he is allowed to pass just by, and then his enemy breaks a dry bamboo stick; the noise causes the victim to turn and look in the direction of the noise—*i.e.* on to the charm—and then the murderer hits the live animal on it, calling his victim's name, and the charm is on him. If the animal is struck on the head, the victim's head is affected, and he has violent fits until "he dies from breaking his neck" in one of them; if the animal is struck to tailwards, the victim gets extremely ill, but in this latter case he can buy off the charm and be cured by a Fangaree man. A similar arrangement is in working order under some South-West coast murder societies I am acquainted with. The interesting point, however, is the necessity of establish-

ing the personal connection between the victim and the charm by means of making him look on the charm and calling his name. Without his looking it's no good. Hence it comes that it is held unwise to look behind when you hear a noise o'night in the bush; indeed, no cautious person, with sense in his head and strength in his legs, would dream of doing this unless caught off guard. In connection also with this turning the face being necessary to the working of the Fangaree charm, there is another charm that is worked under Kufong, according to several natives from its region—the hinterland of Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Ivory Coast—with whom I have associated when we have both been far from our respective homes away in South-West Africa. It is a charm I have never met with as indigenous in the South-West or Oil Rivers Fetish, and I think it has a heavier trace of Mohammedan influence in it than the Fangaree charm. The way it works is this. A man wants to kill you without showing blood. Only leopard society men do that, and your enemy, we will presume, is not a leopard. So he throws his face on you by a process I need not enter into. You hardly know anything is wrong at first; by-and-by you notice that every scene that you look on, night or day, has got that face in it, not a filmy vision of a thing, but quite material in appearance, only it's in abnormal places for a face to be, and it is a face only. It may be on the wall, or amongst the roof poles, or away in a corner of the hut floor; outdoors it is the same—the face is first always, there just where you can see it. Some of my informants hold that it keeps coming closer to you as time goes on; but others say no; it keeps at one distance all the time. This, however, is a minor point; it is its being there that gets to matter. It is

in amongst the bushes at the side of the path, or in the water of the river, or at the end of your canoe, or in the oil in the pots, or in the Manchester cottons in the factory shop. Wherever you look, there it is. In a way it's unobtrusive, it does not spread itself out, or make a noise, or change, yet, sooner or later, in every place, you cannot miss seeing it. At first you think, by changing your environment—going outdoors, coming in, going on a journey, mixing with your fellow-men, or avoiding them—you can get rid of the thing; but you find, when you look round,—a thing you are certain to do when the charm has got its grip,—for sure that face is there as usual. Now this sort of thing tells on the toughest in time, and you get sick of life when it has always got that face mixed up in it, so sick that you try the other thing—death. This is an ill-advised course, but you do not know in time that, when you kill yourself, you will find that on the other side, in the other thing, you will see nothing but that face, that unchanging silent face you are so sick of. The Kufong man who has thrown his face at you knows, and when he hears of your suicide he laughs. Naturally you cannot know, because you are not a Kufong man, or the charm could not be put on you. What you "can do in this here most awful go," as Mr. Squeers would say, I am unfortunately not able to tell you. I made many inquiries from men who know "the face," who had had it happen on people in their families, and so on, but in answer to my inquiries as to why the afflicted did not buy it off, what charms there were against it, and so forth, I was always told it was a big charm, that the man who put it on lost something of himself by so doing, so it was never put on except in cases of great hatred that would stick at nothing and would kill; also that it was of no real use for the

victim to kill his charmer, though that individual, knowing the pleasure so doing would afford his victim, takes good care to go on a journey, and to keep out of the way until the charm has worked out in suicide. There is a certain amount of common sense in this proceeding which is undoubtedly true African, but there is a sort of imaginative touch which makes me suspect Mohammedan infusion; anyhow, I leave you to judge for yourself whether, presupposing you accept the possibility of a man doing such a thing to you or to any one you love, you think he can be safely ignored, or whether he is not an enemy to society who had better be found out and killed—killed in a showy way. Personally I favour the latter course.

There is but one other point in witchcraft in West Africa that I need now detain you with, and that is why a person killed by witchcraft suffers more than one who dies of old age, for herein lies another reason for this hatred of witchcraft. Every human soul in West Africa throughout all the Fetish schools is held to have a certain proper time of incarnation in a human body, whether it be one incarnation or endless series of incarnations; anything that cuts that incarnation period short inconveniences the soul, to say the least of it. Under Ellis's school, and I believe throughout all the others, the soul that lives its life in a body fully through is held happy; it is supposed to have learnt its full lesson from life, and to know the way down to the shadow-land home and all sorts of things. Hence also comes the respect for the aged, common throughout all West Africa. They are the knowing ones. Such an one was the late Chief Long John of Bonny. Now if this process of development is checked by witchcraft and the soul is prematurely driven from the body, it does not know all that it should, and its

condition is therefore miserable. It is, as it were, sent blind, or deaf, or lame into the spirit-land. This is a thing not only dreaded by individuals for themselves, but hated for those they love; hence the doer of it is a hated thing. You must remember that when you get keen hatred you must allow for keen affection, it is not human to have one without the other. That the Africans are affectionate I am fully convinced. This affection does not lie precisely on the same lines as those of Europeans, I allow. It is not with them so deeply linked with sex; but the love between mother and child, man and man, brother and sister, woman and woman, is deep, true, and pure, and it must be taken into account in observing their institutions and ideas, particularly as to this witchcraft where it shows violently and externally in hatred only to the superficial observer. I well remember gossiping with a black friend in a plantation in the Calabar district on witchcraft, and he took up a stick and struck a plant of green maize, breaking the stem of it, saying, "There, like that is the soul of a man who is witched, it will not ripen now."

We will now turn to the consideration of that class whose business in life is mainly to guard the community from witchcraft and from miscellaneous evil spirits acting on their own initiative, the Fetish Men of West Africa, namely, those men and women who devote their lives to the cult of West African religion. Such people you find in every West African district; but their position differs under different schools, and it is in connection with them that we must recognise the differences in the various schools, remembering that the form of Fetish makes the form of Fetish Man, not the Fetish Man the form of Fetish. He may, as it were, embroider it, complicate it, mystify it,

as is the nature of all specialists in all professions, but primarily he is under it, at any rate in West Africa, where you find the Fetish man in every district, but in every district in a different form. For example, look at him under the Ellis school. Where there are well-defined gods, there your Fetish Man is quite the priest, devoting himself to the cult of one god publicly, probably doing a little general practice into the bargain with other minor spirits. To the laity he of course advertises the god he serves as the most reliably important one in the neighbourhood; but it has come under my notice, and you will find under Ellis's, that if the priest of a god gets personally unwell and finds his own deity ineffective, he will apply for aid to a professional brother who serves another god. Below Ellis's school, in the Calabar school, your Fetish Man is somewhat different; the gods are not so definite or esteemed, and the Fetish Man is becoming a member of a set of men who deal with gods in a lump, and have the general management of minor spirits. Below this school, in the Mpongwe, the Fetish Man is even less specialised as regards one god; he is here a manager of spirits at large, with the assistance of a strong spirit with whom he has opened up communication. Below this school, in that of Nkissi, the Fetish Man becomes more truly priest-like—he is the Nganga of an Nkiss; but nevertheless his position is a different one to that of the priest in Ellis's school; here he is in a better position than in the Mpongwe school, but in an inferior one to that in Ellis's, where he is not the lone servitor or manager for a god, but a member of a powerful confraternity. You must bear in mind, of course, that the Fetish Man is always, from a lay standpoint, a highly important person; but professionally, I cannot but think, a priest say of Tando in

Ashantee or of Shango in Dahomey, is of a higher grade than a Nganga to an Nkiss, certainly far higher than a Fetish Man under the Mpongwe school, where every house father and every village chief does a lot of his own Fetish without professional assistance. Of course chiefs and house fathers do a certain amount in all districts—in fact, in West Africa every man and woman does a certain amount of Fetish for himself; but where, as in Ellis's school, you get a regular set of priests and plenty of them, the religion falls into their hands to a greater extent. I feel that the study of the position of Fetish-Men is deserving of great attention. I implore the student who may take it up to keep the Fetish Man for practical purposes distinct from the gentleman who represents the law god-cult—the secret tribal society. If you persist in mixing them, you will have in practical politics as fine a mess as if you mixed up your own Bench of Bishops with the Woolsack. I beg to contribute to the store of knowledge on this point sundry remarks sent me on most excellent native authority from the Gold Coast:—

"The inhabitants of Cape Coast must congratulate themselves that they enjoy the protection of seventy-seven fetishes. Every town (and this town) has one fetish house or temple, often built in a square or oblong form of mud or swish, and thatched over, or constructed of sticks or poles placed in a circular form and thatched. In these temples several images are generally placed. Every Fetish-Man or priest, moreover, has his private fetishes in his own house, one of a bird, stones encased by string, large lumps of cinder from an iron furnace, calabashes, and bundles of sticks tied together with string. All these are stained with red ochre and rubbed over with eggs. They are placed on a square platform and shrouded from the vulgar gaze.

"The fetishes are regarded as spiritual intelligent beings who make the remarkable objects of nature their residence or enter occasionally into the images and other artificial representations which have been duly consecrated by certain ceremonies. It is the belief of this people that the fetishes not unfrequently render themselves visible to mortals. Thus the great fetish of the rock on which Cape Coast Castle stands is said to come forth at night in human form, but of superhuman size, and to proceed through the town dressed in white to chase away evil spirits.

"In all the countries along the Coast (Gold) the regular fetish day is Tuesday. The fishermen would expect that, were they to go out on that day, it would spoil their fishing.

"The priest's office may in some cases be hereditary, but it is not uniformly so, for the children of Fetish-Men sometimes refuse to devote themselves to the pursuits of their parents and engage in other occupations. Any one may enter the office after suitable training, and parents who desire that their children may be instructed in its mysteries place them with a Fetish-Man, who receives a premium for each. The order of Fetish-Men is further augmented by persons who declare that the fetish has suddenly seized on them. A series of convulsive and unnatural bodily distortions establish their claim. Application is made to the fetish for counsel and aid in every domestic and public emergency. When persons find occasion to consult a private Fetish-Man, they take a present of gold-dust and rum and proceed to his house. He receives the presents, and either puts a little of the rum on the head of every image or pours a small quantity on the ground before the platform as an offering

to the whole pantheon; then, taking a brass pan with water in it, he sits down with the pan between him and the fetishes, and his inquirers also seat themselves to await the result. Having made these preparatory arrangements, looking earnestly into the water, he begins to snap his fingers, and addressing the fetish, extols his power, telling him that the people have arrived to consult him, and requesting him to come and give the desired answer. After a time the fetish-man is wrought up into a state of fury. He shakes violently and foams at the mouth; this is to intimate that the fetish was come home and that he himself is no longer the speaker, but the fetish, who uses his mouth and speaks by him. He now growls like a tiger and asks the people if they have brought rum, requiring them at the same time to present it to him. He drinks, and then inquires for what purpose they have sent for him. If a relative is ill, they reply that such a member of their family is sick and they have tried all the means they could devise to restore him, but without success, and they, knowing he is a great fetish, have come to ask his aid, and beg him to teach them what they should do. He then speaks kindly to them, expresses a hope that he shall be able to help them, and says, "I go to see." It is imagined that the fetish then quits the priest, and, after a silence of a few minutes, he is supposed to return, and gives his response to the inquirers.

"In cases of great difficulty the oracle at Abrah is the last resort of the Fantees. This notable oracle is always consulted at night. They find a large fire made upon the ground, and the presents they have brought they place in the hands of the priests who are in attendance. They are then directed to elevate their presents above their heads

and to fix their eyes steadfastly upon the ground, for should they look up, the fetish, it is said, would inflict blindness on them for their sacrilegious gaze. After a time the oracle gives a response in a shrill, small voice intended to convey the idea that it proceeds from an unearthly source, and the inquirers, having obtained the end of their visit, then depart.

"In cases of bodily affliction the fetish orders medical preparations for the patient. If the malady of the patient does not appear to yield to such applications, the fetish is again consulted, and in some cases, as a further expedient, the priest takes a fowl and ties it to a stick, by which operation it is barbarously squeezed to death. The stick is then placed in the path leading to the house for the purpose of deterring evil spirits from approaching it. When the patient is a rich man, several sheep are sacrificed, and he is fetished until the last moment arrives amidst the howls of a number of old Fetish Women, who continue to besmear with eggs and other medicine the walls and door-posts of his house and everything that is around him until he has ceased to breathe."

Not only does the African depart from life under the care of Fetish-Men—and, as my valued correspondent ungallantly remarks, "old fetish-women"—but he is met, as it were, by them on his arrival. My correspondent says "as soon as the child is born the Fetish-Man binds certain fetish preparations round his limbs, using at the same time a form of incantation or prayer. This is done to fortify the infant against all kinds of evil. On the eighth day after the birth, the father of the child, accompanied by a number of friends, proceeds to the house of the mother. If he be a rich man, he takes with him a gallon of ardent spirits to be used on

the festive occasion. On arriving at the house, the friends form a circle round the father, who delivers a kind of address in which he acknowledges the kindness of the gods for giving him the child, and calls upon those present also to thank the fetishes on his account; then, taking the child in his arms, he squirts upon it a little spirit from his mouth, pronouncing the name by which it is to be called. A second name which the child usually takes is that of the day of the week on which it is born. The following are the names of the days in the Fanti language, varied in their orthography according to the sex of the child:—

	Male.	Female.
Sunday	Quisi	Akosua.
Monday	Kujot	Ajua.
Tuesday	Quabina	Abmaba.
Wednesday	Quaku	Ekua.
Thursday	Quahu	Aba.
Friday	Kufi	Efua.
Saturday	Qamina	Ama.

Those ceremonials called on the Coast "customs" are the things that show off the Fetish-Man at the best in more senses of the word than one. We will take the yam custom. The intentions of these yam customs are twofold—firstly they are a thanksgiving to the fetishes for allowing their people to live to see the new yams, and for the new yams, but they are also institutions to prevent the general public eating the new yam before it's ready. The idea is, and no doubt rightly, that unripe yams are unwholesome, and the law is that no new yams must be eaten until the yam custom is made. The Fetish-Men settle when the yams are in a fit state to pass into circulation, and then make the custom. It generally occurs at the end of August, but is sometimes

kept back until the beginning of September. In Fantee all the inhabitants of the towns assemble under the shade of the grove adjoining the fetish hut, and a sheep and a number of fowls are killed, part of their flesh is mixed with boiled yams and palm-oil, and a portion of this mixture is placed on the heads of the images, and the remainder is thrown about before the fetish hut as a peace-offering to the deities.

At Winnebah, on the Gold Coast, there is an interesting modification in the yam custom. The principal fetish of that place, it is believed, will not be satisfied with a sheep, but he must have a deer brought alive to his temple, and there sacrificed. Accordingly on the appointed day every year when the custom is to be celebrated, almost all the inhabitants except the aged and infirm go into the adjoining country—an open park-like country, studded with clumps of trees. The women and children look on, give good advice, and shriek when necessary, while the men beat the bush with sticks, beat tom-toms, and halloo with all their might. While thus engaged, my correspondent remarks in his staid way, "sometimes a leopard starts forth, but it is usually so frightened with the noise and confusion that it scampers off in one direction as fast as the people run from it in another. When a deer is driven out, the chase begins, the people try to run it down, flinging sticks at its legs. At last it is secured and carried exultingly to the town with shoutings and drummings. On entering the town they are met by the aged people carrying staves, and, having gone in procession round the town, they proceed to the fetish house, where the animal is sacrificed, and partly offered to the fetish, partly eaten by the priests."

These yam customs are at their fullest in the Benin

Bights, but you get a custom made for the new yam in all the districts lower down. These customs have long been credited with being stained by human sacrifices. Not altogether unjustly. You can always read human sacrifice for goats and fowls when you are considering a district inhabited by true Negroes, and the occasion is an important one, because in West Africa a human sacrifice is the most persuasive one to the fetishes. It is just with them as with a chief—if you want to get some favour from him you must give him a present. A fowl or a goat or a basket of vegetables, or anything like that is quite enough for most favours, but if you want a big thing, and want it badly, you had better give him a slave, because the slave is alike more intrinsically valuable and also more useful. So far as I know, all human beings sacrificed pass into the service of the fetish they are sacrificed to. They are not merely killed that he may enjoy their blood, but that he may have their assistance. Fetishes have much to do, and an extra pair of hands is to them always acceptable. As for the importance of these harvest customs to the general system of Fetish, I think in West Africa it is small. The goings on, the licentiousness and general jollification that accompany them, upsetting law and order for days, give them a fallacious look of importance; but I think far more really near the heart of the Fetish thought-form is the lonely man who steals at night into the forest to gain from Sasabonsom a charm, and the woman who, on her way back from market, throws down before the fetish houses she passes a scrap of her purchases; compared to the cult of the law-god, well, yam customs are dirty water price, palaver, and insignificant politically.

I have dealt here with Fetish as far as the position of the

human being is concerned, because this phase may make it more comprehensible to my fellow white men who regard the human being as the main thing in the created universe, but I must beg you to remember that this idea of the importance of the human race is not held by the African. The individual is supremely important to himself, and he values his friends and relations and so on, but abstract affection for humanity at large or belief in the sanctity of the lives of people with whom he is unrelated and unacquainted, the African barely possesses. He is only capable of feeling this abstract affection when under the influence of one of the great revealed religions which place the human being higher in the scale of Creation. This comes from no cruelty of mind *per se*, but is the result of the hardness of the fight he has to fight against the world; and possessing this view of the equal, if not greater importance of many of the things he sees round him, the African conceives these things also have their fetish—a fetish on the same ground idea, but varying from human fetish. The politics of Mungo mah Lobeh, the mountain, with the rest of nature, he believes to exist. The Alemba rapid has its affairs clearly, but the private matters of these very great people are things the human being had better keep out of; and it is advisable for him to turn his attention to making terms with them and go into their presence with his petition when their own affairs are prosperous, when their tempers are not as it were up over some private ultra-human affair of their own. I well remember the opinions expressed by my companions regarding the folly—mine, of course—of obtruding ourselves on Mungo when that noble mountain was vexed too much, and the opinion expressed by an Efik friend in a tornado that came down on us. Well, there you have

this difference. I instinctively say "us." She did not think we were objects of interest to the tornado or the forest it was scourging. She took it they had a sort of family row on, and we might get hit with the bits, therefore it was highly unfortunate that we were present at the meeting. Again, it is the same with the surf. The boat-boys see it's in a nasty temper, they keep out of it, it may be better to-morrow, then it will tolerate them, for it has no real palaver with them individually. Of course you can go and upset the temper of big nature spirits, but when you are not there they have their own affairs.

Hence it comes that we have in Fetish a religion in which its believers do not hold that devotion to religion constitutes Virtue. The ordinary citizen is held to be most virtuous who is least mixed up in religious affairs. He can attain Virtue, the love and honour of his fellow-men, by being a good husband and father, an honest man in trade, a just man in the palaver-house, and he must, for the protection of his interests, that is to say, not only his individual well-being, but the well-being of those dependent on him, go in to a certain extent for religious practices. He must associate with spirits because spirits are in all things and everywhere and over everything; and the good citizen deals with the other spirits as he deals with that class of spirits we call human beings; he does not cheat the big ones of their dues; he spills a portion of his rum to them; he gives them their white calicoes; he treats his slave spirits honourably, and he uses his slave spirits for no bad purpose, and if any great grief falls on him he calls on the great over-lord of gods, mentioning these things. But men are not all private citizens; there are men whose destiny puts them in high places—men who are not only house

fathers but who are tribe fathers. They, to protect and further the interests of those under them, must venture greatly and further, and deal with more powerful spirits, as it were, their social equals in spiritdom. These good chiefs in their higher grade dealings preserve the same clean-handed conduct. And besides these there are those men, the Fetish men, who devote their lives to combating evil actions through witches and miscellaneous spirits who prey on mankind. These men have to make themselves important to important spirits. It is risky work for them, for spirits are a risky set to deal with. Up here in London, when I have to deal with a spirit as manifest in the form of an opinion, or any big mind-form incarnate in one man, or in thousands, I often think of an African friend of mine who had troubles, and I think sympathetically, for his brother explained the affair to me. He was an educated man. "You see," he said, "my brother's got a strong Ju Ju, but it's a damned rocky Ju Ju to get on with."

CHAPTER VIII

AFRICAN MEDICINE

Mainly from the point of view of the native apothecary, to which is added some account of the sleep disease and the malignant melancholy.

THERE is, as is in all things West African, a great deal of fetish ceremonial mixed up with West African medical methods. Underlying them throughout there is the fetish form of thought; but it is erroneous to believe that all West African native doctors are witch doctors, because they are not. One of my Efik friends, for example, would no more think of calling in a witch doctor for a simple case of rheumatism than you would think of calling in a curate or a barrister; he would just call in the equivalent to our general practitioner, the abiabok. If he grew worse instead of better, he would then call in his equivalent to our consulting physician, the witch doctor, the abiadiong. But if he started being ill with something exhibiting cerebral symptoms he would have in the witch doctor at once.

This arises from the ground principle of all West African physic. Everything works by spirit on spirit, therefore the spirit of the medicine works on the spirit of the disease. Certain diseases are combatable by certain spirits in certain

herbs. Other diseases are caused by spirits not amenable to herb-dwelling spirits; they must be tackled by spirits of a more powerful grade. The witch doctor who belongs to the school of Nkissism will become more profound on this matter still, and will tell you all herbs, indeed everything that comes out of the Earth, have in them some of the power of the Earth, Nkissi nisi; but the general view is the less concrete one—that it is a matter of only certain herbs having power. This I have been told over and over again in various West Coast tongues by various West African physicians, and in it lies the key to their treatment of disease—a key without which many of their methods are incomprehensible, but which shows up most clearly in the methods of the witch doctor himself. In the practice of the general practitioner, or, more properly speaking, the apothecary, it is merely a theory, just as a village chemist here may prescribe blue pill without worrying himself about its therapeutic action from a scientific point of view.

Before I pass on to the great witch doctor, the physician, I must detain you with a brief account of the neglected-by-traveller-because-less-showy African village apothecary, a really worthy person, who exists in every West African district I know of; often, as in the Calabar and Bonny region, a doctor whose practice extends over a fair-sized district, wherein he travels from village to village. If he comes across a case, he sits down and does his best with it, may be for a fortnight or a month at a time, and when he has finished with it and got his fee, off he goes again. Big towns, of course, have a resident apothecary, but I never came across a town that had two apothecaries. It may be professional etiquette, but, though I never like to think evil of the Profession whatever colour its complexion may be, it

may somehow be connected with a knowledge of the properties of herbs, for I observed when at Corisco that an apothecary from the mainland who was over there for a visit shrank from dining with the local medico.

These apothecaries are, as aforesaid, learned in the properties of herbs, and they are the surgeons, in so far as surgery is ventured on. A witch doctor would not dream of performing an operation. Amongst these apothecaries there are lady doctors, who, though a bit dangerous in pharmacy, yet, as they do not venture on surgery, are, on the whole, safer than their *confrères*, for African surgery is heroic.

Many of the apothecaries' medical methods are fairly sound, however. The Dualla practitioner is truly great on poultices for extracting foreign substances from wounds, such as bits of old iron cooking pot, a very frequent foreign substance for a man to get into him in West Africa, owing to pots being broken up and used as bullets. Almost incredible stories are told by black men and white in Cameroons concerning the efficiency of these poultices; one I heard from a very reliable white authority there of a man who had been shot with bits of iron pot in the thigh. The white doctor extracted several pieces, and declared he had got them all out; but the man went on suffering and could not walk, so finally a country doctor was called in, and he applied his poultice. In a few minutes he removed it, and on its face lay two pieces of iron pot. The white doctor said they had been in the poultice all the time, but he did not carry public opinion with him, for the patient recovered rapidly.

The Negroes do not seem to me to go in for baths in medical treatment quite so much as the Bantu; they hold

more with making many little incisions in the skin round a swollen joint, then encasing it with clay and keeping a carefully tended fire going under it. But the Bantu is given greatly to baths, accompanied by massage, particularly in the treatment of that great West African affliction, rheumatism. The Mpongwe make a bath for the treatment of this disease by digging a suitably sized hole in the ground and putting into it seven herbs—whereof I know the native names only, not the scientific—and in addition in go cardamoms and peppers. Boiling water is then plentifully poured over these, and the patient is laid on and covered with the parboiled green stuff. Next a framework of twigs is placed over him, and he is hastily clayed up to keep the steam in, only his head remaining above ground. In this bath he is sometimes kept a few hours, sometimes a day and a half. He is liable to give the traveller who may happen suddenly on him while under treatment the idea that he is an atrocity; but he is not; and when he is taken out of the bath-poultice he is rubbed and kneaded all over, plenty more hot water being used in the process, this indeed being the palladium of West Coast physic.

The Fjort tribe do not bury their rheumatic patients until they are dead and all their debts paid, but they employ the vapour bath. My friend, Mr. R. E. Dennet, who has for the past eighteen years lived amongst the Fjort, and knows them as no other white man does, and knows also my insatiable thirst for any form of West African information, has kindly sent me some details of Fjort medical methods, which I give in his own words—"The Fjort have names for many diseases; aches are generally described as *tanta ki tanta*; they say the head suffers *Ntu tanta ki tanta*, the chest suffers *Mtima tanta ki tanta*, and so on. Rheumatism

that keeps to the joints of the bones and cripples the sufferer is called *Ngoyo*, while ordinary rheumatism is called *Macongo*. They generally try to cure this disease by giving the sufferers vapour baths. They put the leaves of the *Nvuka* into a pot of boiling water, and place the pot between the legs of the patient, who is made to sit up. They then cover up the patient and the pot with coverings.

"They try to relieve the local pain by spluttering the affected part with chalk, pepper, and logwood, and the leaves of certain plants that have the power of blistering.

"Small-pox they try to cure by smearing the body of the patient over with the pulped leaves of the mzeuzil. Palm oil is also used. These patients are taken to the woods, where a hut is built for them, or not, according to the wealth and desire of their relations. If poor they are often allowed to die of starvation. A kind of long thin worm that creeps about under the eyelid is called *Loyia*, and is skilfully extracted by many of the natives by means of a needle or piece of wood cut to a sharp point.

"Blind boils they call *Fvuma*, and they cure them by splintering over them the pulped root *Nchechi*, mixed with red and white earth. Leprosy they call *Boisi*, ague *Chiosi*, matter from the ear *Mafina*, rupture *Sangafulla*. But diseases of the lungs, heart, liver, and spleen seem to puzzle the native leeches and many natives die from these terrible ills. Cupping and bleeding, which they do with the hollow horns of the goat and the sharpened horn of a kid, are the remedies usually resorted to.

"All persons are supposed to have the power to give their enemies these different sicknesses. Amulets, frontlets, bracelets, and waistbands charged with medicines are also used as either charms or cures.

"A woman who was stung by a scorpion went nearly mad, and, rushing into the river, tried to drown herself. I tried my best to calm her and cure her by the application of a few simple remedies, but she kept us awake all night, and we had to hold her down nearly the whole time. I called in a native surgeon to see if he could do anything, and he spluttered some medicine over her, and, placing himself opposite to her, shouted at her and the evil spirit that was in her. She became calmer, and the surgeon left us. As I was afraid of a relapse, I sent the woman to be cured in a town close by. The Princess of the town picked out the sting of the scorpion with a needle, and gave the woman some herbs, which acted as a strong purge, and cured her. As the Nganga bilongo (apothecary) is busy curing the patient, he generally has a white fowl tied to a string fastened to a peg in the ground close to him. I have described this in *Seven Years among the Fjort.*"

I think this communication of Mr. Dennett's is of much interest, and I hastily beg to remark that, if you have not got a devoted friend to hold you down all night, call in an apothecary in the morning time, and then hand you over to a Princess—things that are not always handy even in West Africa when you have been stung by a scorpion—things that, on the other hand, are always handy in West Africa—carbonate of soda applied promptly to the affected part will save you from wanting to drown yourself and much other inconvenience. The sting should be extracted regardless of the shedding of blood, carbonate of soda in hot water washed over the place, and then a poultice faced with carbonate of soda put on.

Although I do not say these West African doctors possess any specific for rheumatism, it is an undoubted fact that

the South-west Coast tribes, with their poultices and vapour baths, are very successful in treating it, more so than the true Negroes, with their clay plaster and baking method. Rheumatism is a disease the Africans seem especially liable to, whatever may be the local climate, whether it be that of the reeking Niger Delta, or the dry delightful climate of Cabinda; moreover, my friends who go whaling tell me the Bermuda negroes also suffer from rheumatism severely, and are "a perfect cuss," wanting to come and sit in the blood and blubber of fresh-killed whales. Small-pox is a vile scourge to Africa. The common treatment is to smear the body of the patient with the pulped leaves of the mzeuzil palm and with palm oil; but I cannot say the method is successful, save in preventing pitting, which it certainly does. The mortality from this disease, particularly among the South-west Coast tribes, is simply appalling. But it is extremely difficult to make the bush African realise that it is infectious, for he regards it as a curse from a great Nature spirit, sent in consequence of some sin, such as a man marrying within the restricted degree, or something of that kind. Mr. Dennett mentions small-pox patients being sent into the bush with more or less accommodation provided. Mr. Du Chaillu gave Mr. Fraser the idea that the Bakele tribe habitually drove their small-pox sick into the bush and neglected them, which certainly, from my knowledge of the tribe, I must say is not their constant habit by any means. I venture to think that this rough attempt at isolation among the Fjort is a remnant of the influence of the great Portuguese domination of the kingdom of Congo in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, when the Roman Catholic missionaries got hold of the Fjort as no other West African has since been got hold of. Never-

theless the keeping of the sick in huts you will find in almost all districts in places—*i.e.* round the house of a great doctor. My friend Miss Mary Slessor, of Okyon, has the bush round her compound fairly studded with little temporary huts, each with a patient in. You see, distinguished doctors everywhere are a little uppish, and so their patients have to come to them. Such doctors are usually specialists, noted for a cure of some particular disease, and often patients will come to such a man from towns and villages a week's journey or more away, and then build their little shantie near his residence, and remain there while undergoing the cure.

There is a prevalent Coast notion that white men do not catch small-pox from black, but I do not think this is, at any rate, completely true. I was informed when in Loanda that during an epidemic of it amongst the natives, every white man had had a more or less severe touch, and I have known of cases of white men having small-pox in other West Coast places, small-pox they must either have caught from natives or have made themselves, which is improbable. I fancy it is a matter connected with the vaccination state of the white, although there seem to be some diseases prevalent among natives from which whites are immune—the Yaws, for example.

Less terrible in its ravages than small-pox, because it is far more limited in the number of its victims, is leprosy; still you will always find a case or so in a district. You will find the victims outcasts from society, not from a sense of its being an infectious disease, but because it is confounded with another disease, held to be a curse from an aggrieved Nature spirit. There was at Okyon when I was there a leper who lived in a regular house of his own, not

a temporary hospital hut, but a house with a plantation. He led a lonely life, having no wife or family or slave; he was himself a slave, but not called on for service—it was just a lonely life. People would drop in on him and chat, and so on, but he did not live in town. There was also another one there, who had his own people round him, and to whom people would send their slaves, because he was regarded as a good doctor; but he also had his house in the bush, and not in town.

Undoubtedly the diseases that play the greatest continuous havoc with black life in West Africa are small-pox, divers forms of pneumonia, heart-disease, and tetanus, the latter being largely responsible for the terrible mortality among children; but the two West African native diseases most interesting to the European on account of their strangeness, are the malignant melancholy and the sleep sickness, and strangely enough both these diseases seem to have their head centre in one region—the lower Congo. They occur elsewhere, but in this region they are constantly present, and now and again seem to take an epidemic form. Regarding the first-named, I am still collecting information, for I cannot tell whether the malignant melancholy of the lower Congo is one and the same with the hystero-hypochondria, the home-sickness of the true Negro. In the lower Congo I was informed that this malignant melancholy had the native name signifying throwing backwards, from its being the habit of the afflicted to throw themselves backwards into water when they attempted a drowning form of suicide.[1] They do not, however, confine themselves to

[1] An experienced medical man from West Africa informs me that he considers the Africans very liable to hysterical disease, and he attributes the throwing backwards to the patient's desire not to spoil his or her

attempts to drown themselves only, but are equally given to hanging, the constant thing about all their attempts being a lack of enthusiasm about getting the thing definitely done: the patient seems to potter at it, not much caring whether he does successfully hang or drown himself or no, but just keeps on, as if he could not help doing it. This has probably given rise to the native method of treating this disease—namely, holding a meeting of the patient's responsible relations, who point out elaborately to him the advantages of life over death, and enquire of him his reasons for hankering after the latter. If in spite of these representations he persists in a course of habitual suicide, he is knocked on the head and thrown into the river; for it is a nuisance to have a person about who is continually hanging himself to the house ridge pole and pulling the roof half off, or requiring a course of sensational rescues from drowning.

The sleep disease[1] is also a strange thing. When I first arrived in Africa in 1893 there had just been a dreadful epidemic of it in the Kakongo and lower Congo region, and I saw a good many cases, and became much interested in it, and have ever since been trying to gather further information regarding it.

Dr. Patrick Manson in his important paper[2] states that it has never been known to affect any one who has not at one time or another been resident within this area, and

face, a thing ladies are especially careful of, and says that turning a lady face downwards on the sand is as efficacious in breaking up the hysterical fit as throwing water over their clothes is with us.

[1] Negro lethargy; Maladie du sommeil; Enfermedad del sueno; Nelavane (Oulof); Dadane (Sereres); Toruahebue (Mendi); Ntolo (Fjort).

[2] *System of Medicine.* Volume II. Edited by Dr. Clifford Allbutt. Macmillan & Co., 1897.

observes on its distribution that "it seems probable that as our knowledge of Africa extends, this disease will be found endemic here and there throughout the basins of the Senegal, the Niger, the Congo, and their affluents. We have no information of its existence in the districts drained by the Nile and the Zambesi, nor anywhere on the eastern side of the continent." As far as my own knowledge goes the centres of this disease are the Senegal and the Congo. I never saw a case in the Oil Rivers, nor could I hear of any, though I made every inquiry; the cases I heard of from Lagos and the Oil Rivers were among people who had been down as labourers, &c., to the Congo. What is the reason of this I do not know, but certainly the people of the lower Congo are much given to all kinds of diseases, far more so than those inhabiting the dense forest regions of Congo Français, or the much-abused mangrove swamps of the Niger Delta.

Dr. Manson says, "The sleeping sickness has been attributed to such things as sunstroke, beriberi, malaria, poison, peculiar foods, such as raw bitter manioc, and diseased grain; it is evident, however, that none of these things explains all the facts." In regard to this I may say I have often heard it ascribed to the manioc when in Kakongo, the idea being that when manioc was soaked in water surcharged with the poisonous extract, it had a bad effect. Certainly in Kakongo this was frequently the case in many districts where water was comparatively scarce. The pools used for soaking the root in stank, and the prepared root stank, in the peculiar way it can, something like sour paste, with a dash of acetic acid, and thereby the villages stank and the market-places ditto, in a way that could be of no use to any one except a person anxious to find

his homestead in the dark; but Dr. Manson's suggestion is far more likely to be the correct one. Against it I can only urge that in some districts where I am informed by my medical friends that *Filaria perstans* is very prevalent, such as Calabar, the Niger, and the Ogowe, sleeping sickness is not prevalent. Dr. Manson says "the fact that the disease can be acquired only in a comparatively limited area, suggests that the cause is similarly limited; and the fact that the disease may develop years after the endemic area has been quitted, suggests that the cause is of such a nature that it may be carried away from the endemic area and remain latent, as regards its disease-producing qualities for a considerable period; even for years." He then goes on to say, "*Filaria perstans*, so far as is known, is limited in its geographical distribution to Western Equatorial Africa—that is to say, it can be acquired there only—and it may continue in active life for many years after its human host has left the country in which alone it can be acquired. We also know that similar entozoa in their wanderings in the tissues by accident of location, or by disease, or injury of their organs, not infrequently give rise to grave lesions in their hosts. I therefore suggest that possibly *Filiaria perstans* may in some way be responsible for the sleeping sickness. I know that this parasite is extremely common in certain sleeping sickness districts, and moreover, I have found it in the blood of a considerable number of cases of this disease—in six out of ten—including that described by Mackenzie. There are many difficulties in the way of establishing this hypothesis, but there is a sufficient inherent probability about it to make it well worth following up."

The most important statement that I have been able to

get regarding it so far, has been one sent me by Mr. R. E. Dennett; who says "The sleeping sickness though prevalent throughout Kakongo and Loango is most common in the north of Loango and the south of Kakongo, that is north of the river Quillou and among the Mussorongo.

"What the cause of the sickness is, it is hard to say, but it is one of those scourges which is ever with us. The natives say any one may get it, that it is not hereditary, and only infectious in certain stages. They avoid the *dejecta* of affected persons, but they do not force the native to live in the bush as they do a person affected by small-pox.

"Pains in the head chiefly just above the nose are first experienced, and should these continue for a month or so it is to be expected that the disease is *Madotchila*, or the first stage of the sleeping sickness.

"In the word *Madotchila* we have the idea of a state of being poisoned or bewitched. At this stage the sickness is curable, but as the sick man will never admit that he has the sickness and will suffer excruciating pain rather than complain, and as it is criminal to suggest to the invalid or others that he is suffering from the dreadful disease, it often happens that it gets great hold of the afflicted and from time to time he falls down overcome by drowsiness.

"Then he swells up and has the appearance of one suffering from dropsy, and this stage of the disease is called *Malazi*, literally meaning thousands (*Kulazi*=one thousand, the verb *Koula* to become great and *zi* the productive fly.)

"This appears to be the acute stage of the disease and death often occurs within eight days from the beginning of the swelling.

"Then comes the stage *Ntolotolo*, meaning sleep or mock death.

"The next stage is called *Tchela nxela nbela*, that is the knife cutting stage, referring to the operation of bleeding as part of the cure; and the last stage of the disease is called *Nlemba Ngombo*. *Lemba* means to cease. The rites of *Lemba* are those which refer to the marriage of a woman who swears to die with her husband or rather to cease to live at the same time as he does. *Ngombo* is the name of the native grass cloth in which, before the *Nlele* or cotton cloth of the white man appeared, the dead were wrapped previous to burial. Thus in the name *Nlemba Ngombo* we have the meaning of marriage to the deathly winding sheet or shroud.

"I remember how poor Sanda (a favourite servant of Mr. Dennett's, a mussorong boy) was taken sick with pains in his head which I at first mistook for simple headache. As he was of great service to me I kept him in the factory instead of sending him to town (the custom with invalids in Kakongo is that they should go to their town to be doctored). I purged him and gave him strong and continued doses of quinine and he got better; but from time to time he suffered from recurring headache and drowsiness, and on one occasion when I was vexed at finding him asleep and suspecting him of dissipation, was going to punish him, I was informed by another servant that the poor fellow was suffering from the sleeping sickness. I at once sent him to town with sufficient goods to pay his doctor's bill, and his relations did all in their power to have him properly cured, taking him many miles to visit certain Ngangas famed for the cure of this fell disease.

"He came back to me well and happy. The next year

however, the malady returned, and he went to town and gradually wasted away. They told me that sores upon one of his arms had caused him to lose a hand, which he lived to see buried before him. Sanda was of royal blood, so his body was taken across from the north bank to San Antonio or Sonio, on the south bank of the Congo, and there he was buried with his fathers.

"Another sad case was that of a woman who lived in the factory.

"As a child, it appeared afterwards, she had suffered from the disease, and had been cured by the good French doctor then resident in Landana (Dr. Lucan). I knew nothing of this at the time, and put her sickness down to drink, but got a doctor to see her. He could not make out what was the matter, but thought it might possibly be some nervous disease; altogether we were completely puzzled.

"On one occasion during my absence she nearly tortured one of her children to death by stabbing her with a needle. On my return, and when I heard what she had done, I was very angry with her, and turned her out of the factory, and shortly afterwards the poor creature died in the swelling state of the disease.

"Joaõ (a more or less civilised native) tells me that one of his wives was cured of this sleeping sickness. She was living with him in a white man's factory when she had it, and on one occasion fell upon a demijohn and cut her back open rather seriously—the white man cured her so far as the wound was concerned. A native doctor, a Nganga or Kakamucka, later on cured the sleeping sickness. He first gave her an emetic, then each day he gave her a kind of Turkish bath; that is, having boiled certain herbs in water, he placed her within the boiling decoction under a covering

of cloth, making her perspire freely. Towards nightfall he poured some medicine up her nostrils and into her eyes, so that in the morning when she awoke, her eyes and nose were full of matter; at the same time he cupped and bled her in the locality of the pain in the head. What the medicines were I cannot say, neither will the Nganga tell any one save the man he means shall succeed him in his office.

"The native doctors appear to know when the disease has become incurable and the life of the patient is merely a question of a few days, for once while I was at Chemongoanleo, on the lower Congo I heard the village carpenter hammering nails into planks, and asked my servant what they were doing. 'Building Buite's coffin,' he said. 'What, is he dead?' said I. 'No, but he must die soon,' he answered. This statement was confirmed by the relations of Buite who came to me for rum as my share towards his funeral expenses. Imagine my feelings when shortly after this Buite, swollen out of all likeness to his former self, crawled along to the shop and asked me for a gallon of rum to help him pay his doctor's bill.

"A doctor of the Congo Free State began to take an interest in the sickness and asked me to persuade some one suffering from the disease to come and place himself under his care, promising that he would have a place apart made for him at the station, so that he could study the sickness and try to cure the poor fellow. After a good deal of trouble I got him a patient willing to remain with him, but owing to some red tape difficulty as to the supply of food for the sick man this doctor's good intentions came to nought. A Portuguese doctor here also gave his serious attention to the sleeping sickness, and it was reported

that he had found a cure for it in some part of a fresh billy-goat. This good man wanted a special hospital to be built for him and a subsidy so that he might devote himself to the task he had undertaken. His Government, however, although its hospitals are far in advance of those of its neighbours on the Coast, could not see its way to erect such a place."

All I need add to this is that I was informed that the disease when it had once definitely set in ran its fatal course in a year, but that when it came as an epidemic it was more rapidly fatal, sometimes only a matter of a few weeks, and it was this more acute form that was accompanied by wild delirium. Another native informant told me when it was bad it usually lasted only from twenty to forty days.

Monteiro says the sleep disease was unknown south of the Congo until it suddenly attacked the town of Musserra, where he was told by the natives as many as 200 died of it in a few months. This was in 1870, and curious to say it did not spread to the neighbouring towns. Monteiro induced the natives to remove from the old town and the mortality decreased till the disease died out. "There was nothing in the old town to account for this sudden singular epidemic. It was beautifully clean and well-built on high dry ground, surrounded by mandioca plantations, the last place to all appearance to expect such a curious outbreak." [1]

Monteiro also observes that "there is no cure known for it," but he is speaking for Angola, and I think this strengthens his statement that it is a comparatively recent importation there. For certainly there are cures, if not known, at any rate believed in, for the sleeping sickness in its own home Kakongo and Loango. There is a great difference in the

[1] *Angola and the River Congo.* Macmillan. Vol. i., p. 144.

diseases, flora and fauna, of the north and south banks of the Congo—whether owing to the difficulty of crossing the terrifically rapid and powerful stream of the great river I do not know. Still there was—more in former times than now—much intercourse between the natives of the two banks when the Portuguese discovered the Congo in 1487. The town called now San Antonio was the throne town of the kingdom of Kongo, and had nominally as provinces the two districts Kakongo and Loango, these provinces that are now the head centres of the sleep disease. Yet in the early accounts given of Kongo by the Catholic missionaries, who lived in Kongo among the natives, I have so far found no mention of the sleep disease. It is impossible to believe that Merolla, for example, could have avoided mentioning it if he had seen or heard of it. Merolla's style of giving information was, like my own, diffuse. Certainly we must remember that these Catholic missionaries were not much in Loango and Kakongo as those provinces had broken almost entirely away from the Kongo throne prior to the Portuguese arrival, so perhaps all we can safely say is that in the 15—17th centuries there was no sleep disease in the districts on the south bank of the Congo, and it was not anything like so notoriously bad in the districts on the north bank.

Before quitting the apothecary part of this affair, I may just remark that if you, being white, of a nervous disposition, and merely in possession of an ordinary amount of medical knowledge, find yourself called in to doctor an African friend or acquaintance, you must be careful about hot poultices. I should say, *never* prescribe hot poultices. An esteemed medical friend, since dead, told me

that when he first commenced practice in West Africa he said to a civilised native who was looking after his brother —the patient—"Give him a linseed poultice made like this" —demonstration—"and mind he has it hot." The man came back shortly afterwards to say his brother had been very sick, but was no better, though every bit of the stuff had been swallowed so hot it had burnt his mouth. But swallowing the poultice is a minor danger to its exhibition. Even if you yourself see it put on outside, carefully, exactly where that poultice ought to be, the moment your back is turned the patient feeling hot gets into the most awful draught he can find, or into cold water, and the consequences are inflammation of the lungs and death, and you get the credit of it. The natives themselves you will find are very clever at doctoring in their own way, by no means entirely depending on magic and spells; and you will also find they have a strong predilection for blisters, cupping and bleeding, hot water and emetics; in all their ailments and on the whole it suits them very well. Therefore I pray you add your medical knowledge and your special drugs to theirs and for outside applications stick to blisters in place of hot poultices.

CHAPTER IX

THE WITCH DOCTOR

African Medicine mainly from the point of view of the Witch Doctor.

WE will now leave the village apothecary and his methods, and turn to the witch doctor, the consulting physician. He of course knows all about the therapeutic action of low-grade spirits, such as dwell in herbs and so on; but he knows more—namely the actions of higher spirits on the human soul, and the disorders of the human soul into the bargain.

The dogma that rules his practice is that in all cases of disease in which no blood is showing, the patient is suffering from something wrong in the soul. In order to lay this dogma fairly before you, I should here discourse on the nature of spirits unallied to the human soul—non-human spirits—and the nature of the human spirit itself; but as on the one hand, I cannot be hasty on such an important group of subjects, and, on the other, I cannot expect you to be anything else in such a matter, I forbear, and merely beg to remark that the African does not believe in anything being soulless, he regards even matter itself as a form of soul, low, because not lively, a thing other spirit forms use as they please—practically as the cloth of the spirit that uses it. This conception is, as far as I know, constant in both Negro and Bantu. I will therefore here

deal only with what the African regards as merely one class of spirits—an important class truly, but above it there are at least two more important classes, while beneath it in grade there are, I think, about eleven, and equal to it, but differing in nature, several classes—I don't exactly know how many. This class of spirits is the human soul—the *Kla* of the true Negro, the *Manu* of the Bantu. These human souls are also of different grades, for one sort is believed to be existent before birth, as well as during life and after death, while other classes are not. There is more interesting stuff here, but I am determined to stick to my main point now—the medical. Well, the number of souls possessed by each individual we call a human being is usually held to be four—(1) the soul that survives, (2) the soul that lives in an animal away wild in the bush, (3) the shadow cast by the body, (4) the soul that acts in dreams. I believe that the more profound black thinkers hold that these last-named souls are only functions of the true soul, but from the witch doctor's point of view there are four, and he acts on this opinion when doctoring the diseases that afflict these souls of a man.

The dream-soul is the cause of woes unnumbered to our African friend, and the thing that most frequently converts him into that desirable state, from a witch doctor's point of view of a patient. It is this way. The dream-soul is, to put it very mildly, a silly flighty thing. Off it goes when its owner is taking a nap, and gets so taken up with sky-larking, fighting, or gossiping with other dream-souls that sometimes it does not come home to its owner when he is waking up. So, if any one has to wake a man up great care must always be taken that it is done softly—softly, namely gradually and quietly, so as to give the dream-soul

time to come home. For if either of the four souls of a man have their intercommunication broken, the human being possessing them gets very ill. We will take an example. A man has been suddenly roused by some cause or other before that dream-soul has had time to get into quarters. That human being feels very ill, and sends for the Witch Doctor. The medical man diagnoses the case as one of absence of dream-soul, instantly claps a cloth over the mouth and nose, and gets his assistant to hold it there until the patient gets hard on suffocated ; but no matter, it's the proper course of treatment to pursue. The witch doctor himself gets ready as rapidly as possible another dream-soul, which if he is a careful medical man, he has brought with him in a basket. Then the patient is laid on his back and the cloths removed from the mouth and nose, and the witch doctor holds over them his hands containing the fresh soul, blowing hard at it so as to get it well into the patient. If this is successfully accomplished, the patient recovers. Occasionally, however, this fresh soul slips through the medical man's fingers, and before you can say "Knife" is on top of some 100-feet-high or more silk cotton tree, where it chirrups gaily and distinctly. This is a great nuisance. The patient has to be promptly covered up again. If the doctor has an assistant with him, that unfortunate individual has to go up the tree and catch the dream-soul. If he has no assistant, he has to send his power up the tree after the truant ; doctors who are in full practice have generally passed the time of life when climbing up trees personally is agreeable. When, however, the thing has been re-captured and a second attempt to insert it is about to be made, it is held advisable to get the patient's friends and relatives to stand round him in a ring and howl lustily, while your assistant also howling

lustily, but in a professional manner, beats a drum. This prevents the soul from bolting again, and tends to frighten it into the patient.

In some obstinate cases of loss of dream-soul, however, the most experienced medical man will fail to get the fresh soul inserted. It clings to his fingers, it whisks back into the basket or into his hair or clothes, and it chirrups dismally, and the patient becomes convulsed. This is a grave symptom, but the diagnosis is quite clear. The patient has got a *sisa* in him, so there is no room for the fresh soul.

Now, a *sisa* is a dreadful bad thing for a man to have in him, and an expensive thing to get out. It is the surviving soul of a person who has not been properly buried—not had his devil made, in fact. And as every human surviving soul has a certain allotted time of existence in a human body before it can learn the dark and difficult way down to Srahmandazi, if by mischance the body gets killed off before the time is up, that soul, unless properly buried and sent on the way to Srahmandazi, or any other Hades, under expert instruction given as to the path for the dead, becomes a *sisa*, and has to hang about for the remaining years of its term of bodily life.

These *ensisa* are held to be so wretchedly uncomfortable in this state that their tempers become perfect wrecks, and they grow utterly malignant, continually trying to get into a human body, so as to finish their term more comfortably. Now, a *sisa's* chief chance of getting into a body is in whipping in when there is a hole in a man's soul chamber, from the absence of his own dream-soul. If a *sisa* were a quiet, respectable soul that would settle down, it would not matter much, for the dream-soul it supplants is not of much account. But a *sisa* is not

At the best, it would only live out its remaining term, and then go off the moment that term was up, and most likely kill the souls it had been sheltering with by bolting at an inconvenient moment. This was the verdict given on the death of a man I knew who, from what you would call faintness, fell down in a swamp and was suffocated. Inconvenient as this is, the far greater danger you are exposed to by having a *sisa* in you lies in the chances being 10 to 1 that it is stained with blood, for, without being hard on these unfortunate unburied souls, I may remark that respectable souls usually get respectably buried, and so don't become *ensisa*. This blood which is upon it the devils that are around smell and go for, as is the nature of devils; and these devils whip in after the *sisa* soul into his host in squads, and the man with such a set inside him is naturally very ill—convulsions, delirium, high temperature, &c., and the indications to your true witch doctor are that that *sisa* must be extracted before a new dream-soul can be inserted and the man recover.

But getting out a *sisa* is a most trying operation. Not only does it necessitate a witch doctor sending in his power to fetch it *vi et armis*, it also places the medical man in a position of grave responsibility regarding its disposal when secured. The methods he employs to meet this may be regarded as akin to those of antiseptic surgery. All the people in the village, particularly babies and old people—people whose souls are delicate—must be kept awake during the operation, and have a piece of cloth over the nose and mouth, and every one must howl so as to scare the *sisa* off them, if by mischance it should escape from the witch doctor. An efficient practitioner, I may remark, thinks it a great disgrace to allow a *sisa* to escape from him; and

such an accident would be a grave blow to his practice, for people would not care to call in a man who was liable to have this occur. However, our present medical man having got the *sisa* out, he has still to deal with the question of its disposal before he can do anything more. The assistant blows a new dream soul into the patient, and his women see to him; but the witch doctor just holds on to the *sisa* like a bulldog.

Sometimes the disposal of the *sisa* has been decided on prior to its extraction. If the patient's family are sufficiently well off, they agree to pay the doctor enough to enable him to teach the *sisa* the way to Hades. Indeed, this is the course respectable medical men always insist on although it is expensive to the patient's family. But there are, I regret to say, a good many unprincipled witch doctors about who will undertake a case cheap.

They will carry off with them the extracted *sisa* for a small fee, then shortly afterwards a baby in the village goes off in tetanic convulsions. No one takes much notice of that, because it's a way babies have. Soon another baby is born in the same family—polygamy being prevalent, the event may occur after a short interval—well, after giving the usual anxiety and expense, that baby goes off in convulsions. Suspicion is aroused. Presently yet another baby appears in the family, keeps all right for a week may be, and then also goes off in convulsions. Suspicions are confirmed. The worm—the father, I mean—turns, and he takes the body of that third baby and smashes one of its leg bones before it is thrown away into the bush; for he knows he has got a wanderer soul—namely, a *sisa*, which some unprincipled practitioner has sent into his family. He just breaks the leg so as to warn the soul he is

not a man to be trifled with, and will not have his family kept in a state of perpetual uproar and expense. It sometimes happens, however, in spite of this that, when his fourth baby arrives, that too goes off in convulsions. Thoroughly roused now, paterfamilias sternly takes a chopper and chops that infant's remains up extremely small, and it is scattered broadcast. Then he holds he has eliminated that *sisa* from his family finally.

I am informed, however, that the fourth baby to arrive in a family afflicted by a *sisa* does not usually go off in convulsions, but that fairly frequently it is born lame, which shows that it is that wanderer soul back with its damaged leg. It is not treated unkindly but not taken much care of, and so rarely lives many years—from the fetish point of view, of course, only those years remaining of its term of bodily life out of which some witchcraft of man or some vengeance of a god cheated it.

If I mention the facts that when a man wakes up in the morning feeling very stiff and with "that tired feeling" you see mentioned in advertisements in the newspapers, he holds that it arises from his own dream-soul having been out fighting and got itself bruised; and that if he wakes up in a fright, he will jump up and fire off his gun, holding that a pack of rag tag devils have been chasing his soul home and wishing to scare them off, I think I may leave the complaints of the dream-soul connected with physic and pass on to those connected with surgery.

Now, devoted as I am to my West African friends, I am bound in the interests of Truth to say that many of them are sadly unprincipled. There are many witches, not witch doctors, remember, who make it a constant practice to set traps for dream-souls. Witches you will find from

Sierra Leone to Cameroons, but they are extra prevalent on the Gold Coast and in Calabar.

These traps are usually pots containing something attractive to the soul, and in this bait are concealed knives or fish-hooks—fish-hooks when the witch wants to catch the soul to keep, knives when the desire is just to injure it.

In the case of the lacerated dream-soul, when it returns to its owner, it makes him feel very unwell; but the symptoms are quite different from those arising from loss of dream-soul or from a *sisa*.

The reason for catching dream-souls with hooks is usually a low mercenary one. You see, many patients insist on having their own dream-soul put back into them—they don't want a substitute from the doctor's store—so of course the soul has to be bought from the witch who has got it. Sometimes, however, the witch is the hireling of some one intent on injuring a particular person and keen on capturing the soul for this purpose, though too frightened to kill his enemy outright. So the soul is not only caught and kept, but tortured, hung up over the canoe fire and so on, and thus, even if the patient has another dream-soul put in, so long as his original soul is in the hands of a torturer, he is uncomfortable.

On one occasion, for example, I heard one of the Kru boys who were with me making more row in his sleep, more resounding slaps and snores and grunts than even a normal Kru boy does, and, resolving in my mind that what that young man really required was one of my pet pills, I went to see him. I found him asleep under a thick blanket and with a handkerchief tied over his face. It was a hot night, and the man and his blanket were as wet with sweat as if they had been dragged through a river. I suggested

to head-man that the handkerchief muzzle should come off, and was informed by him that for several nights previously the man had dreamt of that savoury dish, crawfish seasoned with red pepper. He had become anxious, and consulted the head-man, who decided that undoubtedly some witch was setting a trap for his dream-soul with this bait, with intent, &c. Care was now being taken to, as it were, keep the dream-soul at home. I of course did not interfere and the patient completely recovered.

We will now pass on to diseases arising from disorders in the other three souls of a man. The immortal or surviving soul is liable to a disease that its body suffered from during its previous time on earth, born again with it. Such diseases are quite incurable, and I only personally know of them in the Calabar and Niger Delta, where reincarnation is strongly believed in.

Then come the diseases that arise from injury to the shadow-soul. It strikes one as strange at first to see men who have been walking, say, through forest or grass land on a blazing hot morning quite happily, on arrival at a piece of clear ground or a village square, most carefully go round it, not across, and you will soon notice that they only do this at noontime, and learn that they fear losing their shadow. I asked some Bakwiri I once came across who were particularly careful in this matter why they were not anxious about losing their shadows when night came down and they disappeared in the surrounding darkness, and was told that that was all right, because at night all shadows lay down in the shadow of the Great God, and so got stronger. Had I not seen how strong and long a shadow, be it of man or tree or of the great mountain itself, was in the early morning time? Ah me! I said, the proverb

is true that says the turtle can teach the spider. I never thought of that.

Murders are sometimes committed by secretly driving a nail or knife into a man's shadow, and so on ; but if the murderer be caught red-handed at it, he or she would be forthwith killed, for all diseases arising from the shadow-soul are incurable. No man's shadow is like that of his own brother, says the proverb.

Now we come to that very grave class of diseases which arise from disorders of the bush-soul. These diseases are not all incurable, nevertheless they are very intractable and expensive to cure. This bush-soul is, as I have said, resident in some wild animal in the forest. It may be in only an earth pig, or it may be in a leopard, and, quite providentially for the medical profession no layman can see his own soul—it is not as if it were connected with all earth pigs, or all leopards, as the case may be, but it is in one particular earth pig or leopard or other animal—so recourse must be had to medical aid when anything goes wrong with it. It is usually in the temper that the bush-soul suffers. It is liable to get a sort of aggrieved neglected feeling, and want things given it. When you wander about the wild gloomy forests of the Calabar region, you will now and again come across, far away from all human habitation or plantation, tiny huts, under whose shelter lies some offering or its remains. Those are offerings administered by direction of a witch doctor to appease a bush-soul. For not only can a witch doctor see what particular animal a man's bush-soul is in, but he can also see whereabouts in the forest that animal is. Still, these bush-souls are not easily appeased. The worst of it is that a man may be himself a quiet steady man, careful of his diet

and devoted to a whole skin, and yet his bush-soul be a reckless blade, scorning danger, and thereby getting itself shot by some hunter or killed in a trap or pit; and if his bush-soul dies, the man it is connected with dies. Therefore if the hunter who has killed it can be found out—a thing a witch doctor cannot do unless he happens by chance to have had his professional eye on that bush-soul at the time of the catastrophe; because, as it were, at death the bush-soul ceases to exist—that hunter has to pay compensation to the family of the deceased. On the other hand, if the man belonging to the bush-soul dies, the bush-soul animal has to die too. It rushes to and fro in the forest—"can no longer find a good place." If it sees a fire, it rushes into that; if it sees a lot of hunters, it rushes among them —anyhow, it gets itself killed off.

We will now turn our attention to that other great division of diseases—namely such as are caused only and directly by human agency. Those I have already detained you too long over are caused by spirits acting on their own account, for even in the case of the trapped dream-souls they are held themselves to have shown contributory negligence in getting hooked or cut in traps.

The others arise from what is called witchcraft. You will often hear it said that the general idea among savage races is that death always arises from witchcraft; but I think, from what I have said regarding diseases arising from bush-souls' bad tempers, from contracting a *sisa*, from losing the shadow at high noon, and from, it may be, other causes I have not spoken of, that this generalisation is for West Africa too sweeping. But undoubtedly sixty per cent of the deaths are believed to arise from witchcraft. I would put the percentage higher, were it not for the terrible

mortality from tetanus among children, which sometimes is and sometimes is not put down to witchcraft, and the mortality from smallpox and the sleep disease down south in Loango and Kakongo, those diseases not being in any case that I have had personal acquaintance with imputed to witchcraft at all. Indeed I venture to think that any disease that takes an epidemic form is regarded as a scourge sent by some great outraged Nature spirit, not a mere human dabbler in devils. I have dealt with witchcraft itself elsewhere, therefore now I only speak regarding it medically; and I think, roughly speaking, not absolutely, mind you, that the witching something *out* of a man is the most common iniquity of witchcraft from Cape Juby to Cameroons, the region of the true Negro stock; while from Cameroons to Benguella—the limit of my knowledge to the south on the western side of the continent—the most common iniquity of witchcraft is witching something into him. As in the diseases arising from the loss of the dream-soul I have briefly dealt with the witching something out, I now turn to the witching something in.

I well remember, in 1893, being then new to and easily alarmed by the West Coast, going into a village in Kakongo one afternoon and seeing several unpleasant-looking objects stuck on poles. Investigation showed they were the lungs, livers, or spleens of human beings; and local information stated that they were the powers of witches—witches that had been killed and, on examination, found to have inside them these things, dangerous to the state and society at large. Wherefrom it was the custom to stick up on poles these things as warnings to the general public not to harbour in their individual interiors things to use against their fellow-creatures. They mutely but firmly said,—

"See! if you turn witch, your inside will be stuck on a pole."

I may remark that in many districts of the South-West coast and middle Congo it is customary when a person dies in an unexplainable way, namely without shedding blood, to hold a post-mortem. In some cases the post mortem discloses the path of the witch through the victim —usually, I am informed, the injected witch feeds on the victim's lungs—in other cases the post-mortem discloses the witch power itself, demonstrating that the deceased was a keeper of witch power, or, as we should say, a witch.

Once when I was at Batanga a woman dropped down on the beach and died. The usual post-mortem was held, and local feeling ran high. "She no complain, she no say nothing, and then she go die one time." The post-mortem disclosed what I think you would term a ruptured aneurism of the aorta, but the local verdict was "she done witch herself"—namely that she was a witch, who had been eaten by her own power, therefore there were great rejoicings over her death.

This dire catastrophe is, however, liable to overtake legitimate medical men. All reasonable people in every clime allow a certain latitude to doctors. They are supposed to know things other people need not, and to do things, like dissections and such, that other people should not, and no one thinks any the worse of them. This is the case with the African physician, whom we roughly call the witch doctor, but whose full title is the combatant of the evils worked by witches and devils on human souls and human property. This medical man has, from the exigencies of his profession, to keep in his own inside a power, and a good strong one at that, which he can employ in his

practice by sending it into patients to fetch out other witch powers, *sisas*, or any miscellaneous kind of devil that may have got into them. His position is totally different from that of the layman. He is known to possess a witch power, and the knowledge of how to employ it; but instead of this making him an object of aversion to his fellow-men, it secures for him esteem and honour, and the more terrifically powerful his power is known to be, the more respect he gains; for suppose you were taken ill by a real bad devil, you would prefer a medical man whose power was at least up to that devil's fighting weight.

Nevertheless his having to keep the dangerous devil in his own inside exposes the witch doctor to grave personal danger, for if, from a particularly healthy season, or some notorious quack coming into his district, his practice falls off, and his power is thereby not kept fed, that unfortunate man is liable to be attacked by it. This was given me as the cause of the death of a great doctor in the Chiloango district, and I heard the same thing from the Ncomi district, so it is clear that many eminent men are cut off in the midst of their professional career in this way.

As for what this power is like in its corporal form, I can only say that it is evidently various. One witch doctor I know just to the north of Loango always made it a practice to give his patients a brisk emetic as soon as he was called in, and he always found young crocodiles in the consequences. I remember seeing him in one case secure six lively young crocodiles that had apparently been very recently hatched. These were witch powers. Again, I was informed of a witch who was killed near the Bungo River having had found inside him a thing like a lizard, but with wings like a bat. The most peculiar form of witch power I have heard of as being

found inside a patient was on the Ogowe from two native friends, both of them very intelligent, reliable men, one of them a Bible reader. They said that about two years previously a relation of theirs had been badly witched. A doctor had been called in, who administered an emetic, and there appeared upon the scene a strange little animal that grew with visible rapidity. An hour after its coming to light it crawled and got out of the basin, and finally it flew away. It had bat's wings and a body and tail like a lizard. This catawampus, my informant held, had been witched into the man when it was "small, small"—namely, very small. It might, they thought, have been given to their relation in some food or drink by an enemy, but for sure, if it had not been disturbed by that emetic, it would have grown up inside the man and have eaten its way out through his vitals.

From the whole of the above statements I think I have shown you that if as a witch doctor you are called in to a patient who is ill, but who is not showing blood anywhere, your diagnosis will be that he has got some sort or another of devil the matter with him, and that the first indication is to find out who put that devil in, because, in the majority of cases, until you know this you can't get it out; the second is to get it out; the third is to prevent its getting adrift, and into some one else.

I have only briefly sketched the ideas and methods of witch doctors in West Africa, in so far as treatment is concerned. The infinite variety of methods employed in detecting who has been the witch in a given case; the infinite variety of incantations and so on, I have no space to dwell on here, and will conclude by giving you a general sketch of the career of a witch doctor.

We will start with the medical student stage. Now, every West African tribe has a secret society—two, in fact, one for men and one for women. Every free man has to pass through the secret society of his tribe. If during this education the Elders of this society discover that a boy is what is called in Calabar an *ebumtup*—a person who can see spirits—the elders of the society advise that he should be brought up to the medical profession. Their advice is generally taken, and the boy is apprenticed as it were to a witch doctor, who requires a good fee with him. This done, he proceeds with his studies, learns the difference between the dream-soul basket and the one *sisas* are kept in—a mistake between the two would be on a par with mistaking oxalic acid for Epsom salts. He is then taught how to howl in a professional way, and, by watching his professor, picks up his bedside manner. If he can acquire a showy way of having imitation epileptic fits, so much the better. In fact, as a medical student, you have to learn pretty well as much there as here. You must know the dispositions, the financial position, little scandals, &c., of the inhabitants of the whole district, for these things are of undoubted use in divination and the finding of witches, and in addition you must be able skilfully to dispense charms, and know what babies say before their own mothers can. Then some day your professor and instructor dies, his own professional power eats him, or he tackles a disease-causing spirit that is one too many for him, and on you descend his paraphernalia and his practice.

It is usual for a witch doctor to acquire for his power a member of one of the higher grade spirit classes—he does not acquire a human soul—and his successor usually, I think, takes the same spirit, or, at any rate, a member of the

same class. This does not altogether limit you as a successor to a certain line of practice, but, as no one spirit can do all things, it tends to make you a specialist. I know a district where, if any one wanted a canoe charm, they went to one medical man; if a charm to keep thieves off their plantation, to another.

This brings us to the practice itself, and it may be divided into two divisions. First, prophylactic methods, namely, making charms to protect your patient's wives, children, goats, plantations, canoes, &c. from damage, houses from fire, &c., &c., and to protect the patient himself from wild animals and all danger by land or water. This is a very paying part, but full of anxiety. For example, put yourself in the place of a Mpangwe medical friend of mine. You have with much trouble got a really valuable spirit to come into a paste made of blood and divers things, and having made it into a sausage form, and done it round with fibre wonderfully neatly, you have painted it red outside to please the spirits—because spirits like red, they think it's blood. Well, in a week or so the man you administered it to comes back and says "that thing's no good." His paddle has broken more often than before he had the thing. The amount of rocks, and floating trees, to say nothing of snags, is, he should say, about double the normal, whereby he has lost a whole canoe load of European goods, and, in short, he doesn't think much of you as a charm maker. Then he expectorates and sulks offensively. You take the charm, and tell him it was a perfectly good one when you gave it him, and you never had any complaints before, but you will see what has gone wrong with it. Investigation shows you that the spirit is either dead or absent. In the first case it has been killed by a stronger spirit of its own class; in

the second, lured away by bribery. Now this clearly points to your patient's having a dangerous and powerful enemy, and you point it out to him and advise him to have a fresh and more powerful charm—necessarily more expensive—with as little delay as possible. He grumbles, but, realising the danger, pays up, and you make him another. The old one can be thrown away, like an empty pill-box.

The other part of your practice—the clinical—consists in combating those witches who are always up to something—sucking blood of young children, putting fearful wild fowl into people to eat up their most valued viscera, or stealing souls o' nights, blighting crops, &c.

Therefore you see the witch doctor's life is not an idle one; he has not merely to humbug the public and pocket the fees—or I should say "bag," pockets being rare in this region—but he works very hard, and has his anxieties just like a white medical man. The souls that get away from him are a great worry. The death of every patient is a danger to a certain extent, because the patient's soul will be vicious to him until it is buried. But I must say I profoundly admire our West African witch doctors for their theory of *sisas* as an explanation of their not always being able to insert a new soul into a patient, for by this theory they save themselves somewhat, and do not entail on themselves the treatment their brother medicos have to go through on the Nass River in British Columbia. According to Mr. Fraser, in that benighted Nass River district those native American doctors hold it possible that a doctor may swallow a patient's soul by mistake. This is their theory to account for the strange phenomenon of a patient getting worse instead of better when a doctor has been called in, and so the unfortunate doctor who has had this accident

occur is made to stand over his patient while another medical man thrusts his fingers in his throat, another kneads him in the abdomen, and a third medical brother slaps him on the back. All the doctors present have to go through the same ordeal, and if the missing soul does not turn up, the party of doctors go to the head doctor's house to see if by chance he has got it in his box. All the things are taken out of the box, and if the soul is not there, the head doctor, the President of the College of Physicians, the Sir Somebody Something of the district, is held by his heels with his learned head in a hole in the floor, while the other doctors wash his hair. The water used is then taken and poured over the patient's head.

I told this story to all the African witch doctors I knew. I fear, that being hazy in geography, they think it is the practice of the English medical profession; but, anyhow every one of them regarded the doctors of the Nass River as a set of superstitious savages, and imbeciles at that. Of course a medical man had to see to souls, but to go about in squads, administer rough emetics to themselves, instead of to the patients, and as for that head washing—well, people can be fool too much! None of them showed the slightest signs of adopting the British Columbia method, none of them showed even any signs of adopting my suggestion that they should go and teach those benighted brothers of theirs the theory of *insisa*.

If you ask me frankly whether I think these African witch doctors believe in themselves, I think I must say, Yes; or perhaps it would be safer to say they believe in the theory they work by, for of that there can be very little doubt. I do not fancy they ever claim invincible power over disease;

they do their best according to their lights. It would be difficult to see why they should doubt their own methods, because, remember, all their patients do not die; the majority recover. I am not putting this recovery down to their soul-treatment method, but to the village apothecary, who has usually been doctoring the patient with drugs before the so-called witch doctor is called in. Of course the apothecary does not get the credit of the cure in this case, but I fancy he deserves it. Another point to be remembered is that the Africans on the West Coast, at any rate, are far more liable than white men to many strange nervous disorders, especially to delirium, which often occurs in a comparatively slight illness. Why I do not pretend to understand; but I think in these nervous cases the bedside manners of a witch doctor—though strongly resembling that of the physician who attended the immortal Why Why's mother—may yet be really useful.

As to the evil these witch doctors do in the matter of getting people killed for bewitching it is difficult to speak justly. I fancy that, on the whole, they do more good than harm, for remember witchcraft in these districts is no parlour game; in the eyes of Allah as well as man it is murder, for most of it is poison. Most witchcraft charms I know of among people who have not been in contact with Mohammedanism have always had that element of mixing something with the food or drink—even in that common, true Negro form of killing by witchcraft, putting medicine in the path, there is a poisoned spike as well as charm stuff. There can be no doubt that the witch doctor's methods of finding out who has poisoned a person are effective, and that the knowledge in the public mind of

this detective power keeps down poisoning to a great extent. Of the safeguards against unjust accusation I will speak when treating of law.

As to their using hypnotism, I suppose they do use something of the sort at times. West Indians, with whom I was always anxious to talk on the differences and agreements between Vodou and Obeah and their parent West African religion, certainly, in their description of what they called Wanga—and translated as Glamour—seemed to point to this; but for myself, save in the case of blood coming before, one case of which I witnessed, I have seen nothing beyond an enormously elaborated common sense. I dare not call it sound, because it is based on and developed out of animism, and of that and our white elaborated view I am not the judge, remembering you go the one way, I the other—which is the best, God knows.

CHAPTER X

EARLY TRADE IN WEST AFRICA

Concerning the accounts given by classic writers of West Africa, and of the method of barter called the Silent Trade.

IT is a generally received opinion that there are too many books in the world already. I cannot, however, subscribe to any Institution that proposes to alter this state of affairs, because I find no consensus of opinion as to which are the superfluous books; I have my own opinion on the point, but I feel I had better keep it to myself, for I find the very books I dislike—almost invariably in one-volume form, as this one is, though of a more connected nature than this is likely to be—are the well-beloved of thousands of my fellow human beings; and so I will restrict my enthusiasms in the matter of books to the cause of attempting to incite writers to give us more. If any one wants personally to oblige me he will forthwith write a masterly history of the inter-relationships—religious, commercial, and cultural—of the other races of the earth with the African, and he can put in as an appendix a sketch of the war conquest of Africa by the white races. I do not ask for a separate volume on this, because there will be

so many on the others; moreover, it is such a kaleidoscopic affair, and its influence alike on both European, Asiatic, and African seems to me neither great nor good.

For the past fifteen years I have been reading up Africa; and the effect of the study of this literature may best be summarised in Mr. Kipling's observation, "For to admire an' for to see, For to be'old this world so wide, It's never been no good to me, But I can't drop it if I tried." Wherein it has failed to be of good, I hastily remark, is that after all this fifteen years' reading, I found I had to go down into the most unfashionable part of Africa myself, to try to find out whatever the thing was really like, and also to discover which of my authors had been doing the heaviest amount of lying. It seemed clear to the meanest intelligence that this form of the darkening of counsel was fearfully prevalent among them, because of the way they disagreed about things among themselves. Of course I have so far only partially succeeded in both these matters; for, regarding the first, personal experience taught me that things differed with district; regarding the second, that all the people who have been to Africa and have written books on it have, off and on, told the truth, and that what seemed to the public who have not been there to be the most erroneous statements have been true in substance and in fact, and that those statements they have accepted immediately as true on account of their either flattering their vanity or comfortably explaining the reasons of the failure of their endeavours, have the most falsehood in them.

There is another point I must mention regarding this material for that much wanted colossal work on the history

of African relationships with the rest of the world—which I do not intend to write, but want written for me—and that is the superiority both in quality and quantity of the portion which relates to the Early History of the West Coast. Yet very little attention has been given in our own times to this. I might say no attention, were it not for Sir A. B. Ellis, that very noble man and gallant soldier, who did so much good work for England both with sword and pen. Just for the sake of the work being worth doing, not in the hope of reward; for twenty years' service and the publication of a series of books of great interest and importance taught him that West Africa was under a ban that it was beyond his power to remove; nevertheless he went on with his work unfaltering, if not uncomplaining, and died, in 1895, a young man, practically killed by the Warim incident—the true history of which has yet to be written. For the credit of my country, I must say that just before death he was knighted.

I do not quote Colonel Ellis's works extensively, because, for one thing, it is the duty of people to read them first-hand, and as they are perfectly accessible there is no excuse for their not doing so; and, for another thing, I am in touch with the majority of the works from which he gathered his information regarding the early history, and with the natives from whom he gathered his ethnological information. There are certain points, I grant, on which I am unable to agree with him, such as the opinion he formed from his personal prejudices against the traders in West Africa; but in the main, regarding the regions with which he was personally acquainted and on which he wrote —the Bight of Benin regions—I am only too glad that there is Colonel Ellis for me to agree with.

The fascination of West Africa's historical record is very great, bristling as it does with the deeds of brave men, bad and good, black and white. What my German friends would call the Blüth-period of this history is decidedly that period which was inaugurated by the great Prince Henry the Navigator; and no man who has ever read, as every man should read, Mr. Major's book on Prince Henry, can fail to want to know more still, and what happened down in those re-discovered Bights of Benin and Biafra after this Blüth-period closed. This can be done, mainly thanks to a Dutchman named Bosman, who was agent for the great Dutch house of the Gold Coast for many years circa 1698, and who wrote home to his uncle a series of letters of a most exemplary nature reeking with information on native matters and local politics, and suffused with a tender fear of shocking his aunt, which did not, however, seem in his opinion to justify him in suppressing important ethnological facts.

Regarding the ethnological information we have of the Gold Coast natives, the most important works are those by the late Sir A. B. Ellis. His books are almost models of what books should be that are written by people studying native customs in their native land. We have also the results of scientific observers in the works of Buckhardt and Bastian, besides a mass of scattered information in the works of travellers, Bosman, Barbot, Labat, Mathews, Bowditch, Cruickshank, Winwood Reade, H. M. Stanley, Burton, Captain Canot, Captain Binger, and others, and quite recently a valuable contribution to our knowledge in Mr. Sarbar's *Fanti Customary Laws*.[1] I think that every student of the African form of

[1] Clowes and Sons, 1897.

thought should master these works thoroughly, and I fully grant their great importance; but, nevertheless, I am quite unable to agree with Mr. Jevons (*Introduction to the History of Religion*, p. 164) when he says, regarding Fetishism, that "it is certainly amongst the inhabitants of the Gold and Slave Coasts that the subject can best be studied." These two Coasts are, I grant, the best place for a student who is resident in Europe, and therefore dependent on the accounts given by others of the things he is dealing with, to draw his information from, because of the accuracy and extent of the information he can get from Ellis's work; but, apart from Ellis the value of these regions to an ethnologist is but small, and for an ethnologist who will go out to West Africa and study his material for himself, the whole of the Coast regions of the Benin Bight are but of tenth-rate importance, because of the great and long-continued infusion of both Mohammedan and European forms of thought into the original native thought-form that has taken place in these regions. This subject I will refer to later, and I will return now to the history, confining myself to the earlier portions of it, and to that which bears on the early development of trade.

I sincerely wish I could go into full details regarding the whole history of the locality here, because I know my only chance of being allowed to do so is on paper, and it would be a great relief to my mind; but I forbear, experience having taught me that the subject, to put it mildly, is not of general interest. For example, person after person have I tried to illuminate and educate in the matter of our relationships with the Ashantees; always, alas, in vain. Before I have got

half through they "hear a voice I cannot hear that's calling them away;" or remember something "that must be done at once;" or, worst of all, go off straightway to sleep, after once or twice feebly enquiring, "Where is that place?" Of course I am glad that my little knowledge has been the comfort it has to several people. Once, when I was homeward-bound along the Gold Coast, three gentlemen came on board very ill from fever, and homeward-bound, too. Their worst symptom was agonising insomnia. "Not a wink," they assured my friend the Irish purser, had they had "for a couple of months." "We'll soon put that right for you on board this boat," he said, in his characteristically kind and helpful manner. To my great surprise, that same afternoon he deliberately tackled me on the subject of the real reason that induced Osai Kwofi Kari Kari to cross the Prah in January, 1873. I was charmed at this unwonted display of interest in the subject, and hoped also to gain further information on it from those recently shipped Gold Coasters in the smoking-room. I was getting on fairly well with it; and my friend the purser, instead of having "some manifests to write out," as was usual with him, nobly battled with the intricacies of the subject for a good half hour and more; and then, just when I was in the middle of some topographical elucidation, accompanied by questions, up that purser rose, yawned and stretched himself, and hailed the doctor, who happened to be passing by. "What do you think of that, doctor?" he said, pointing to the settee. "Do them a power of good," says his compatriot the medico. Turning round, I saw the three victims of insomnia grouped together; the middle man had his head pillowed on the oilclothed top of the table, and reclining, more or less gracefully, against him on either side

were his two companions, their half-smoked pipes fallen from their limp fingers—all profoundly, unquestionably asleep. "Oh, yes! of course, I was delighted," but not flattered; and, warned by this incident, I will here only say that should any one be really interested in the eventful history of the long struggle between the English, Portuguese, French, Dutch, and Brandenburgers, with each other and with the natives, for the possession of the country where the black man's gold came from, they will find a good deal about it in the works already cited; and should any medical man—the remedy is perhaps a little too powerful to be trusted in the hands of the laity—require it for the treatment of insomnia as above indicated, I recommend that part of it which bears on the Ashantee question in small but regular doses.

Our earliest authorities mentioning Africa with the knowledge in them that it is surrounded by the ocean, save at Suez, are Theopompus and Herodotus. Unfortunately all Theopompus's works are lost to us, voluminous though they were, his history alone being a matter of fifty-eight volumes, while before he took up history he had won for himself a great reputation as an orator, during the reigns of Philip and Alexander the Great. He is perpetually referred to, however, though not always praised, by other great classical writers, Cicero, Pliny, the two Dionysiuses and others, and was evidently regarded as a great authority; one particular fragment of his works that refers to Africa is preserved by Ælian, and consists of a conversation between Silenus and Midas, King of Phrygia. Silenus says that Europe, Asia, and Africa are surrounded by the sea, but that beyond the known world there is an island of immense extent containing large animals and

men of twice our stature. This island Mr. Major thinks, and doubtless rightly, is connected with the tradition of our old friend—you know what I mean, as Captain Marryat's boatswain says—the Atlantis of Plato. This affair I will no further mention or hint at, but hastily pass on to that other early authority, Herodotus, who was born 484 years before Christ, and whose works, thanks be, have survived. He says: "The Phœnician navigators under command of Pharaoh-Necho, King of Egypt, setting sail from the Red Sea, made their way to the Southern Sea; when autumn approached they drew their vessels to land, sowed a crop, waited until it was ripe for harvest, reaped it, and put again to sea." Having spent two years in this manner, in the third year they reached the Pillars of Hercules, (Jebu Zatout, and Gibraltar), and returned to Egypt, "reporting," says Herodotus, "what does not find belief in me, but may perhaps in some other persons, for they said in sailing round Africa they had the sun to the right (to the North) of them. In this way was Libya first known."[1]

Much has been written regarding the accuracy of these Phœnician accounts; for, as frequently happens, their mention of a thing that seemed at first to brand their account as a lie remains to brand it as the truth—and although I have no doubt those Phœnician gentlemen heartily wished they had said nothing about having seen the sun to the North, yet it was best for them in the end, as it demonstrates to us that they had, at any rate, been South of the Equator; and we owe to Herodotus here, as in many other places in his works, a debt of gratitude for honestly putting down what he did not believe himself; he

[1] *Melpomene*, IV. 41.

also has suffered from this habit of accuracy, becoming himself regarded by the superficial people of this world as a credulous old romancer, which he never was. Good man, he only liked fair play. "Here," he says as it were, "is a thing I am told. It's a bit too large for my belief hatch, but if you can get it down yours, you're free and welcome to ship it." Herodotus, however, accepts the fact that Africa was surrounded by water, save at its connection with the great land mass of the earth (Europe and Asia) by the Isthmus of Suez.

Several other attempts to circumnavigate Africa were made prior to Herodotus's writings. One that we have mention of[1] was made by a Persian nobleman named Sataspes, whom Xerxes had, for a then capital offence, condemned to impalement. This man's mother persuaded Xerxes that if she were allowed to deal with her son she would impose on him a more terrible punishment even than this, namely, that he should be condemned to sail round Libya. There is no doubt this good lady thought thereby to save her son; but, as events turned out, Xerxes, by accepting her suggestion, did not cheat justice by granting this as an alternative to immediate execution. However, off Sataspes sailed with a ship and crew from Egypt, out through the Pillars of Hercules, and doubling the Cape of Libya, then named Solois, he steered south, and, says Herodotus, "traversed a vast extent of sea for many months, and finding he had still more to pass he turned round and returned to Egypt and then back to Xerxes, who had him then impaled, because, for one thing he had not sailed round Libya, and for another, Xerxes held he lied about those regions of it that he had visited; for Sataspes

[1] *Melpomene*, IV. 43.

said he had seen a nation of little men who wore garments made of palm leaves, who, whenever his crew drew their ships ashore, left their cities and flew into the mountains, though he did them no injury, only taking some cattle from them; and the reason he gave for his not sailing round Libya was that his ships could go no further." Sataspes's end was sad, but one cannot feel that he was a loss to the class of romancers of travel.

Another and a more determined navigator was Eudoxus of Cyzicus (B.C. 117). The scanty record we have of his exploration is of great interest. While he was making a stay in Alexandria, he met an Indian who was the sole survivor of a crew wrecked on the Red Sea coast. He is the Indian who persuaded Ptolemy Euergetes to fit out an expedition to sail to India, and off they went and succeeded in it greatly, but on their return the king seized the cargo; so therefore, as a private enterprise, the thing was a failure. However, Eudoxus was a man of great determination, and on the death of Ptolemy VII. in the reign of his successor, he set out on another expedition to India. On his return voyage he was driven down the African Coast, and found there on the shore amongst other wreckage the prow of a vessel with the figure of a horse carved on it. This relic he took with him as a curiosity, and on his successful return to Alexandria exhibited it there in the market place, and during its exhibition it was recognised by some pirates from Cadiz (Gades) who happened to be in that city, and they testified that the small vessels which were employed in the fisheries along the West African Coast as far as the River Lixius (Wadi al Knos) always had the figure of a horse on their prows, and on this account were called "horses." The fact

of this wreck of a vessel belonging to Western Europe being found on the East Coast of Africa joined with the knowledge that these vessels did not pass through the Mediterranean Sea, gave Eudoxus the idea that the vessel he had the figure head of must have come round Africa from the West Coast, and he then proceeded to Cadiz and equipped three vessels, one large and two of smaller size, and started out to do the same thing, bar wrecking. He sailed down the known West Coast without trouble, but when he came to passing on into the unknown seas, he had trouble with the crews, and was compelled to beach his vessels. After doing this he succeeded in persuading his crews to proceed, but it was then found impossible to float the largest vessel, so she was abandoned, and the expedition proceeded in the smaller and in a ship constructed from the wreck of the larger on which the cargo was shipped with the expedition. Eudoxus reached apparently Senegambia, and then another mutiny broke out, and he had to return to Barbary. But undaunted he then fitted out another expedition, consisting of two smaller vessels, and once again sailed to the South to circumnavigate Africa. Nothing since has been heard of Eudoxus of Cyzicus surnamed the Brave.[1]

On his second voyage he fell in with natives who, he says, spoke the same language that he had previously heard on the Eastern Coast of Africa. If he was right in this, some authors hold he must have gone down the West Coast, at least as far as Cameroons, because there you

[1] See Ellis's *History of the Gold Coast*, also Tozer's *History of Ancient Geography*, Beazley's *Dawn of Modern Geography*, and *Strabo*, B.C. 25, book xvii, edited by Theodore Jansonius ab Almelooven, Amsterdam, 1707.

nowadays first strike the language, which does stretch across the continent, namely, the Bantu, and we have no reason to suppose that the Bantu border line was ever further North on this Coast than it is at present; indeed, the indications are, I think, the other way; but as far as the language goes, it seems to me that Eudoxus could have heard the same language as on the East African Coast far higher up than Cameroons, namely, on the Moroccoan Coast, for in those days, prior to the great Arab invasion, most likely the language of the Berber races had possession of Northern Africa from East Coast to West. However, there is another statement of his which I think points to Eudoxus having gone far South, namely, that the reason of his turning back was an inability to get provisions, for this catastrophe is not likely to have overtaken so brave a man as he was until he reached the great mangrove swamps of the Niger. The litoral of the Sahara was in those days, we may presume, from the accounts we have far later from Leo Africanus and Arab writers, more luxuriant and heavily populated than it is at present.

Of these voyages, however, we have such scant record that we need not dwell on them further, and so we will return to about 300 B.C., and consider the wonderful voyage made by Hanno of Carthage, of which we have more detailed knowledge; although there still remains a certain amount of doubt as to who exactly Hanno was, mainly on account of Hanno apparently having been to Carthage what Jones is to North Wales—the name of a number of individuals with a habit of doing everything and frequently distinguishing themselves greatly. The Carthaginians were to the classic world much what the English are to the modern, a great colonising,

commercial people—warlike when wanted. They planted colonies in North Africa and elsewhere, and had commercial relationship with all the then known nations of the world, including a trans-Sahara trade with the people living to the South of the Great Desert. We shall never know to the full where those Carthaginians went, from the paucity of record; but we have record of the voyage of this Hanno in a *Periplus* originally written in the Punic language and then translated into Greek.[1] Hanno, it seems, was a chief magistrate at Carthage, and Pliny says his voyage was undertaken when Carthage was in a most flourishing condition.[2] From the *Periplus* we learn that the expedition to the West Coast consisted of sixty ships of fifty oars each, and 30,000 persons of both sexes, ample provisions and everything necessary for so great an undertaking. The object of this expedition was to explore, to found colonies, and to increase commerce. The expedition, after passing the Pillars of

[1] There is doubt as to whether this *Periplus* is the entire one with which the classic writers were conversant.

[2] "Et Hanno Carthaginis potentia florente circumvectus a Gabibus ad finem Arabiae navigationem eam prodidit scripto"; (and Hanno, when Carthage flourished, sailed round from Cadiz to the remotest parts of Arabia, and left an account of his voyage in writing) Plinius, lib. ii. cap. lxvii. p.m. 220. See also lib. v. cap. i. p.m. 523, and Pomponius Mela, lib. iii. cap. ix. p. 63, edit. Isaici Vossii.

There is an English version of the *Periplus*, edited by Falconer, London, 1797; and an Oxford edition of it, and some other works, by Dr. Hudson, 1698. Also there is a work on Hanno's *Periplus* based on MS. in the Meyer Museum at Liverpool by Simonides, not the Iambic poet, who wrote a ridiculous satire against women, quoted by Ælian; nor yet Simonides who was one of the greatest of the ancient poets, and flourished in the seventy-fifth Olympia; but a modern gentleman connected with America, whose work I am sufficient scholar neither to use nor to criticise.

Hercules, sailed two days along the coast and founded their first colony, which they called Thymatirum. Just south of this place, on a promontory called Soloeis, they built a temple to Neptune. A short distance further on they found a beautiful lake, the edges of which were bordered with large reeds, the country abounding in elephants and other game; a day's sail from this place, they founded five small cities near the sea called respectively Cariconticos, Gytte, Acra, Millitea, and Arambys. The next most important part of their voyage was their discovery of the great River Lixius, on the banks of which they found a pastoral people they called the Lixitae. These seem to have been a mild people; but there were in the neighbourhood tribes of a ferocious character, and they were also told there were Trogloditae dwelling in the mountains, where the Lixius took its rise, who were fleeter than horses. Unfortunately we are not told how long the Carthaginians took in reaching this River Lixius; but if the Carthaginians had been keeping close in shore they would not have met with a river that looked great until they reached the mouth of the Ouro (23°36′ N. lat.), which is four miles wide, but only an estuary; but as the Carthaginians do not seem to have gone up it, they may not have noticed its imperfections, and so, pursuing that dangerous method of judging a West African river from its mouth, regarded it as a great river. However this may have been, they took with them as guides and interpreters some of the Lixitae, and continued their voyage for three days, when they came to a large bay, an island in it containing a circle of five stadia, and proceeded to found another colony on that island, calling it Cerne, where they judged

they were as far from the Pillars of Hercules as these were from Carthage. So it is held now that Cerne is the same as the French trading station Arguin (about 240 miles north of Senegal River), on to whose shoals the wreck of the French frigate *La Méduse* drifted in 1816, the tragedy of which is familiar to us all from Géricault's great painting.

Hanno next called at a place where there was a great lake, which they entered by sailing up a river called by them Cheretes. In this they found three islands, all larger than the island of Cerne. One day's sail then brought them to the extremity of the lake overhung by mountains, which were inhabited by savages clad in wild beasts' skins, who prevented their landing by pelting them with stones. The next point in their voyage was a large and broad river, infested with crocodiles and river horses; and from this place they made their way back to Cerne, where they rested and repaired and then set forth again, sailing south along the African shores for twelve successive days. The language of the natives of these regions the Lixitae did not understand, and the Carthaginians could not hold any communication with them for another reason, that they always fled from them; towards the last day they approached some large mountains covered with trees. They went on two days further, when they came to a large opening in the sea, on land on either side of which was a plain whereon they saw fires in every direction. At this place[1] they refilled their

[1] Major identifies this place with Cape Verde, pointing out that the inability of the Lixitae interpreters to understand the language accords with the fact that at the Senegal commences the country of the blacks; "the immense opening" he regards as the Gambia.

water barrels, and continued their voyage five days further, when they reached a large bay which their interpreters said was called the Western Horn. In this bay they found a large island, in the centre of which was a salt lake with a small island in it. When they went ashore in the day time they saw no inhabitants, but at night time they heard in every direction a confused noise of pipes, cymbals, drums and song, which alarmed the crew, while the diviners they had with them, equivalent to our naval chaplains, strongly advised Hanno to leave that place as speedily as possible. Hanno, however, being less alarmed than his companions, pushed on South, and they soon found themselves abreast of a country blazing with fires, streams of which seemed to be pouring from the mountain tops down into the sea. "We sailed quickly thence," says Hanno, "being much terrified." Proceeding four days further they found that things did not improve in appearance from their point of view, for the whole country seemed ablaze at night, a country full of fire, and at one point the fire seemed to fly up to the very stars. Hanno says their interpreters told them that this great fire was the Chariot of the Gods. Three days more sailing South brought them to another bay, called the Southern Horn. In this bay they found a large island, in which again there was a lake with another island in it, having inhabitants who were savage, and whose bodies were covered with hair. These people the interpreters called the Gorillae—some were captured and taken aboard, but so savage and unmanageable did they prove that they were killed and the skins preserved. As most of the inhabitants of the Islands of the Gorillae seemed to be females, and as these ladies had made such a gallant fight of it with their Carthaginian

captors, Hanno kept their skins to hang up in the Temple of Juno on his return home, evidently intending to be complimentary both to the Goddess and the Gorillae; but it is to be feared neither of them took it as it was meant, for Hanno had no luck from the Gods after this, having to turn back from shortness of provisions, and finally ending his career by, some say, being killed, and others say exiled from Carthage on account of his having a lion so tame that it would carry baggage for him; Punic public opinion held that this demonstrated him to be a man dangerous to the State. The Gorillae seem to have worked out their vengeance on white men by making it more than any man's character for truth is worth to see one of them—except stuffed in a museum, with a label on.

How far Hanno really went down South is not known with any certainty. M. Gosselin held he only reached the River Nun, on the Moroccoan coast. Major Rennell fixed his furthest point somewhere north of Sierra Leone, and held the Island of the Gorillae to be identical with the Island of Sherboro'. Bougainville believed that he at any rate went well into the Bight of Benin, while others think he went at any rate as far as Gaboon. I cannot myself see why he should not have done so, considering the winds and tides of the locality and the time taken; indeed, I should be quite willing to believe he went down to Congo, and that in the most terrific of the fires he witnessed an eruption of the volcanic peak of Cameroon, a volcano not yet extinct. Indeed the name given to this high fire "that almost reached the stars" by his interpreters—the Chariot of the Gods—is not so very unlike the name the Cameroon Peak bears to this day, Mungo Mah Lobeh, the Throne or Place of Thunder, and

this native name is also capable of being translated into "the Place of the Gods" or spirits. The thing I do not believe in the affair is that the Lixitae interpreters ever called it or any other place "a chariot"; for as Hanno was the first white man they had seen, and they had no chariots of their own, it is unlikely they could have known anything of chariots; and I think this Chariot of the Gods must have been an error of Hanno's in translating his interpreter's remarks. It is perfectly excusable in him if it is so, because to understand what an interpreter means who does not know your language, and whose own language you are not an adept in, and who is translating from a language regarding which you are both alike ignorant, is a process fraught with difficulty. I have tried it, so speak feelingly. It is true it is not an impossibility, as those unversed in African may hastily conjecture, because at least one-third of an African language consists in gesture, and this gesture part is fairly common to all tribes I have met, so that by means of it you can get on with daily life; but it breaks down badly when you come to the names of places. I myself once went on a long march to a place that subsequent knowledge informed me was "I don't know" in my director's native tongue. Still, if he did not know, I did not know, and so it was all the same. I got there all right, therefore it did not matter to me; but I was haunted during my stay in it by a confused feeling that perhaps I was flying in the face of Science by being somewhere else—being in two places at the same time.

I really, however, cannot help thinking Hanno must have got past the Niger Delta; for there is nothing to frighten any one, as far as the look of things go, until you go south from Calabar, and find yourself facing

that magnificent Great Cameroon and Fernando Po; and Hanno's people were scared as they were never scared before. Yet, again, there are those fires, which were in the main doubtless what that very wise and not half-appreciated missionary, the late Rev. J. Leighton Wilson, says they were, namely, fires made by the native burning down the high grass at the end of a dry season to make his farms. Now Hanno could have seen any quantity of these along parts of the shores of the Bight of Benin, but is not likely to have seen them to any alarming extent on the Biafran Bight, because the shores thereof are deeply fringed with mangrove swamps, and the native does not start making farms in them. Hanno might have seen what looked like the smoke of innumerable fires on the sides of Cameroon Mountain and Fernando Po. I myself have seen the whole mighty forest there smoking as if beneath it smouldered the infernal regions themselves; but it is only columns and wafts of mist, and so gives no blaze at night; if you want to see a real land of flame with, over it, a pall of cloud reflecting back its crimson light in a really terrifying way, you must go south of Cameroon, south of Congo Français, south, until you reach the region of the Great Congo itself; and there—on the grass-covered hills and plains of the Lower Congo lands—you will see a land of fire at the end of the dry season, terrific enough to awe any man. Of course, if Hanno passed the Congo and went down as far as the fringing sands of the Kalahari desert, he would certainly not have been able to get stores; but also down there he would not have met with an island on which there were gorillas; for even if we grant that there was sufficient dense forest south of the Congo in his days for gorillas to have inhabited, and allow that in old days gorillas were

south of the Congo, which they are not now, still, there is no island near the coast. So I am afraid we cannot quite settle Hanno's furthest point, and must content ourselves by saying he was a brave man, a good sailor, and a credit therefore to his country and the human race.

After Hanno's time I cannot find any record of a regular set of trading expeditions down the West Coast by the Carthaginians. From scattered observations it is certain the commerce of the Carthaginians with the Barbary Coast and the Bight of Benin was long carried on; but it does not seem to have been carried on along the coast of the Bight of Biafra; and the voyage in 170 B.C. may be cited in support of this, showing that the voyage as far south as Eudoxus went was then considered as marvellous and new. Still, on the other hand, it must be remembered that, prior to our own day, the navigator had no great inducement to tell the rest of the world exactly where he had been; indeed, the navigator whose main interest is commerce is, to this day, not keen on so doing. He would rather keep little geographical facts—such as short cuts by creeks, and places where either gold, or quicksilver, and buried ivory, is plentiful—to himself, than go explaining about these things for the sake of getting an unrepaying honour. One sees this so much in studying the next period of this history—the early Portuguese and early French discoveries; you will find that one of these nations knew about a place years before the other came along, and discovered it, and claimed it as its own—with disputes as a natural consequence.

There has, however, been one very interesting point in the dealing of the nations of higher culture with the Africans, and that is the way their commerce

with them has had periods of abeyance. The Egyptians have left us record of having been extensively in touch with the interior of Africa, *via* the Nile Valley,—then came a pause. Then came the Carthaginian commerce,—then a pause. Then the Portuguese, French, English, Dutch, and Dane trading enterprise, say, roughly from 1340 to 1700,—then a falling off of this enterprise; revived during the Slave-trade days, falling off again on its suppression, and reviving in our own days. I suppose I ought to say greatly, but—well, we will discuss that later. These pauses have always been caused by the nations of higher culture getting too busy with wars at home to trouble themselves about the African, all the more so because the produce of Africa has filtered slowly, whether it was fetched by white man or no, into their markets through the hands of the energetic North African tribes and the Arabs. Whenever the white man has settled down with his home affairs, and has had time to spare, he has always gone and looked up the African again, "discovered him," and he has always found him in the same state of culture that the pioneers of the previous Blüth-period found him in. Hanno does not find down the West Coast another Carthage—he finds bush fires, and hears the tom-tom and the horn and the shouts. He finds people slightly clad and savage. Then read Aluise da Ca da Mostro and the rest of Prince Henry's adventures; well, you might—save that the old traveller is more interesting—almost be reading a book published yesterday. The only radical change made for large quantities of Africans by means of white intercourse was made by exporting them to America. How this is going to turn out we do not yet know; and whether or no, after the present period of white exploitation of Africa,

there may not come another pause from our becoming too interested in some big fight of our own to keep up our interest in the African, we cannot tell; so I will pass on to a very interesting point in a method of trade mentioned by the early authorities—the silent trade.

Herodotus gives us the first description of it,[1] saying that the Carthaginians state that beyond the Pillars of Hercules there is a region of Libya, and men who inhabit it. When they arrive among these people and have unloaded their merchandise they set it in order on the shore, go on board their ships and make a great smoke, and the inhabitants seeing the smoke come down to the sea shore, deposit gold in exchange for the merchandise, and withdraw to some distance. The Carthaginians then going ashore examine the goods, and if the quantity seems sufficient for the merchandise they take it and sail away; but if it is not sufficient they go on board again and wait; the natives then approach and deposit more gold until they have satisfied them: neither party ever wrongs the other, for they do not touch the gold before it is made adequate to the value of the merchandise, nor do the natives touch the merchandise before the Carthaginians have taken the gold.

The next description of this silent trade I have been able to find is that given by Aluise da Ca da Mostro, a Venetian gentleman who, allured by the accounts of the riches of West Africa given by Prince Henry the Navigator, abandoned trading with the Low Countries, entered the Prince's service, and went down the Coast in 1455. When in the district of Cape Blanco, at a place called by him Hoden, he was told that six days' journey from this place

[1] *Melpomene*, IV. 96.

there was a place called Tagazza, signifying a chest of gold; there large quantities of rock salt were dug from the earth every year and carried on camels by the Arabs and the Azanaghi, who were tawny Moors,[1] in separate companies to Timbuk, and from thence to the Empire of Melli, which belonged to the negroes; having arrived there they disposed of their salt in the course of eight days, at the rate of two and three hundred mitigals the load (a mitigal = a ducat), according to the quantity thereof, after which they returned home with the gold they had been paid in. These merchants reckoned it forty days' journey on horseback from Tagazza to "Timbuk" as Mostro, while from Timbuk to Melli it is thirty days' journey. Ca da Mostro then inquired to what use the salt taken to Melli was put; and they said that the merchants used a certain quantity of it themselves, for on account of their country lying near the Line, where the days and nights are of equal length, at certain seasons of the year the heats were excessive, and putrefied the blood unless salt was taken; their method of taking it was to dissolve a piece in a porringer of water daily and drink it. When the remainder of the salt reached Melli, carried thither on camels, each camel load was broken up into pieces of a suitable size for one man to carry. A large number of what Ca da Mostro calls footmen—whom we nowadays call porters—were assembled at Melli to be ready to carry the salt from thence further away still into the heart of Africa.

I have dwelt on this salt's wanderings because we

[1] The writers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries commonly divide up the natives of Africa into—1, Moors; 2, Tawny Moors; 3, Black Moors, a term that lingers to this day in our word *Blackamoor*; 4, Negroes.

have here a very definite description of a trade route, and the importance of understanding these trade routes is very great. We do not learn, however, exactly where the salt goes to beyond Melli; but Melli seems to have been, as Timbuctoo was, and to a certain extent still is, a trade focus; and from Melli evidently the salt went in many directions, and it is interesting to note Ca da Mostro's observations on the salt porters, who he says carry in each hand a long forked stick, which when they are tired they fix into the ground and rest their loads on; so to-day may you see the West African porters doing, save that it is only the porters who have to pass over woodless plateaux on their journeys that carry two sticks.

Speaking however further on the course of this salt trade Ca da Mostro says that some of the merchants of Melli go with it until they come to a certain water, whether fresh or salt his informant could not say; but he holds it most likely was fresh, or there would be no need of carrying salt there; and it is the opinion of the few people who have of late years interested themselves in the matter that this great water is the Niger Joliba. But be this as it may, when those merchants from Melli arrive on the banks of this great water they place their shares of salt in heaps in a row, every one setting a mark on his own. This done, the merchants retire half a day's journey; then "the negroes, who will not be seen or spoken with, and who seem to be the inhabitants of some islands, come in large boats," and having viewed the salt lay a sum of gold on every heap and then retire. When they are all gone the negro merchants who own the salt return, and if the quantity of gold pleases them they take it and leave the salt; if not, they leave both and withdraw themselves again. The silent people then

return, and the heaps from which they find the gold has been removed they carry away, and either advance more gold to the other heaps or take their gold from them and leave the salt. In this manner, says Ca da Mostro, from very ancient times these negroes have traded without either speaking to or seeing each other, until a few years before, when he was at Cape Blanco among the Azanaghi, who supply the negroes of Melli with their salt as aforesaid, and who evidently get from them gossip as well as gold. They told him that their fellow merchants among the black Moors had told them that they had had serious trouble in consequence of the then Emperor of Melli, a man who took more general interest in affairs than was common in Emperors of Melli, having been fired with a desire to know why these customers of his traders did not like being seen; he had commanded the salt merchants when they next went to traffic with the silent people to capture some of them for him by digging pits near the salt heaps, concealing themselves therein and then rushing out and seizing some of the strange people when they came to look at the salt heaps. The merchants did not at all relish the royal commission, for they knew, as any born trader would, that it must be extremely bad for trade to rush out and seize customers by the scruff of their necks while they were in the midst of their shopping. However, much as the command added to their commercial anxieties, the thing had to be done, or there was no doubt the Emperor would relieve them both of all commercial anxieties and their heads at one and the same time. So they carried out the royal command, and captured four of their silent customers. Three they immediately liberated, thinking that to keep so many would only increase the bad blood, and one specimen

[*To face page* 245.

OIL RIVER NATIVES.

would be sufficient to satisfy the Imperial curiosity. Unfortunately however the unfortunate captive they retained would neither speak nor eat, and in a few days died; and so the salt merchants of Melli returned home in very low spirits, feeling assured that their Emperor would be actively displeased with them for failing to satisfy his curiosity, and that the silent customers would be too alarmed and angered with them for their unprovoked attack to deal with them again. Subsequent events proved them to be correct in both surmises: his Majesty was highly disgusted at not having been able to see one of these people; and naturally, for the description given to him of those they had captured was at least highly interesting. The merchants said they were a span taller than themselves and well shaped, but that they made a terrible figure because their under lip was thicker than a man's fist and hung down on their breasts; also that it was very red, and something like blood dropped from it and from their gums. The upper lip was no larger than that of other people, and owing to this there were exposed to view both gums and teeth, which were of great size, particularly the teeth in the corners of the mouth. Their eyes were of great size and blackness. As for the customers, for three years went the merchants of Melli to the banks of the great water and arranged their salt heaps and looked on them for gold dust in vain: but the fourth year it was there; and the merchants of Melli believed that their customers' lips had begun to putrefy through the excessive heat and the want of salt, so that being unable to bear so grievous a distemper they were compelled to return to their trade. Things were then established on a fairly reasonable basis; the merchants did not again attempt to see their customers, and they knew

from their experience with their captive that they were by nature dumb; for had there been speech in him, would he not have spoken under the treatment to which he was subjected? And as for the Emperor of Melli he said right out he did not care whether those blacks could speak or no, so long as he had but the profit of their gold.

This gold, I may remark, that was collected at Melli was divided into three parts: the first was sent by the Melli caravans to Kokhia on the caravan route to Syria and Cairo; the other two parts went from Melli to Timbucto, where it was again divided up, some of it going to Toet,[1] and from thence along the coast to Tunis, in Barbary. Some of it went to Hoden, not far from Cape Blanco, and from there to Oran and Hona; thence it went to Fez, Morocco, Azila-Azasi, and Moosa, towns outside the Straits of Gibraltar, whence it went into Europe, through the hands of Italians, and other Christians, who exchanged their merchandise for the wares of the Barbary moors; and the remainder of the gold went down to the West African Coast to the Portuguese at Arguin. This description of the gold route is by Ca da Mostro, and is the first description of West African trade route I have found.

But I must tear myself from the fascination of gold and its trade routes and return to that silent trade. The next person after Ca da Mostro to mention it is Captain Richard Jobson, who in 1620–1621 made a voyage especially to discover "the golden trade," of what he calls Tombâk, which is our last author's Timbuk, by way of the Gambia, then held by many to be a mouth of the Niger.

[1] Ato, according to the version given in Grynæus.

Jobson's inquiries regarding this "golden trade" informed him that the great demand for salt in the Gambia trade arose from the desire for it among the Arabiks of Barbary; that the natives themselves only consumed a small percentage of this import, trading away the main to those Arabiks in the hinterland, who in their turn traded it for gold to Tombak, where the demand for it was great, because that city, although possessing all manner of other riches and commodities, lacked salt, so that the Arabiks did a good trade therein. Jobson was also informed that the Arabiks had, as well as the market for salt at Timbuctoo, a market for it with a strange people who would not be seen, and who lived not far from Yaze; that the salt was carried to them, and in exchange they gave gold. Asking a native merchant, who was engaged in this trade, why they would not be seen, he made a sign to his lips, but would say no more. Jobson, however, learnt from other sources that the reason these negroes buy salt from the tawny Moors is because of the thickness of their lips, which hang down upon their breasts, and, being raw, would putrefy if they did not take salt, a thing their country does not afford, so that they must traffic for it with the Moors. The manner they employ, according to Jobson, is this: the Moors on a fixed day bring their goods to a place assigned, where there are certain houses appointed for them; herein they deposit their commodities, and, laying their salt and other goods in parcels or heaps separately, depart for a whole day, during which time their customers come, and to each parcel of goods lay down a proportion of gold as they value it, and leave both together. The merchants then return, and as they like the bargain take the gold and leave their wares, or if they think the price

offered too little, they divide the merchandise into two parts, leaving near the gold as much as they are inclined to give for it, and then again depart. At their next return the bargain is finished, for they either find more gold added or the whole taken away, and the goods left on their hands.

A further confirmation of the existence of this method of trading we find in that most interesting voyage of Claude Jannequin, Sieur de Rochfort, 1639. He says, "In this cursed country"—he always speaks of West Africa like that—"there is no provision but fish dried in the sun, and maize and tobacco." The natives will only trade by the French laying down on the ground what they would give for the provisions, and then going away, on which the natives came and took the commodities and left the fish in exchange. The regions he visited were those of Cape Blanco.

To this day you will find a form of this silent trade still going on in Guinea. I have often seen on market roads in many districts, but always well away from Europeanised settlements, a little space cleared by the wayside, and neatly laid with plantain leaves, whereon were very tidily arranged various little articles for sale — a few kola nuts, leaves of tobacco, cakes of salt, a few heads of maize, or a pile of yams or sweet potatoes. Against each class of articles so many cowrie shells or beans are placed, and, always hanging from a branch above, or sedately sitting in the middle of the shop, a little fetish. The number of cowrie shells or beans indicate the price of the individual articles in the various heaps, and the little fetish is there to see that any one who does not place in the stead of the articles removed their proper price, or who meddles with the till,

shall swell up and burst. There is no doubt it is a very easy method of carrying on commerce.

In what the silent trade may have originated it is hard to say; but one thing is certain, that the dread and fear of the negroes did not result from the evil effects of the slave trade, as so many of their terrors are said to have done, for we have seen notice of it long before this slave trade arose. Nevertheless, there can be but little doubt that it arose from a sense of personal insecurity, and has fetish in it, the natives holding it safer to leave so dangerous a thing as trafficking with unknown beings—white things that were most likely spirits, with the smell of death on them—in the hands of their gods. In the cases of it that I have seen no doubt it was done mostly for convenience, one person being thereby enabled to have several shops open at but little working expense; but I have seen it employed as a method of trading between tribes at war with each other.[1] We must dismiss, I fear, bashfulness regarding lips as being a real cause; but I will not dismiss the bleeding lips as a mere traveller's tale, because I have seen quite enough to make me understand what those people who told of bleeding thick lips meant; several, not all of my African friends, are a bit thick about the lower lip, and when they have been passing over waterless sun-dried plateaux or bits of desert they are anything but decorative. The lips get swollen and black, and Ca da Mostro does not go too far in his description of what he was told regarding them.

[1] Mr. Ling Roth kindly informs me of further instances of this silent trading to be found in *Lander's Journal*, Lond., 1832, iii. 161–163, and Forbes's *Wanderings of a Naturalist*, Lond. 1886, where it is cited for the Kubus of Sumatra. He says it also occurs among the Veddahs, and that there is in no case any fetish control.

CHAPTER XI

FRENCH DISCOVERY OF WEST AFRICA

Concerning the controversy that is between the French and the Portuguese as to which of them first visited West Africa, with special reference to the fort at Elmina.

WE will now turn our attention to the other pioneers of our present West African trade, and commence with the French, for we cannot disassociate our own endeavours in this region from those of France, Portugal, Holland, and the Brandenburgers; nor are we the earliest discoverers here. When we English heard the West African Coast was a region worth trading with, those great brick-makers for the architects of England's majesty, the traders, went for it and traded, and have made that trading pay as no other nation has been able to do. However, from the first we got called hard names—pirates, ruffians, interlopers, and such like—in fact, every bad name the other nations could spare from the war of abuse they chronically waged against each other.

The French claim to have traded with West Africa prior to the discoveries made there by the emissaries of Prince Henry the Navigator.[1] When on my last voyage out I was

[1] See the first edition of *Henry the Navigator*, by R. H. Major, who, with the enormous wealth of his knowledge, vigorously defends the claim to Portuguese priority; although I do not quite agree with

in French territory, I own the discovery of this claim of my French friends came down on me as a shock, because on my previous voyage out I had been in Portuguese possessions, and had spent many a pleasant hour listening to the recital of the deeds of Diego Caõ and Lopez do Gonsalves, and others of that noble brand of man, the fifteenth-century Portugee. I heard then nothing of French discoverers, and also had it well knocked out of my mind that the English had discovered anything of importance in West Africa save the Niger outfalls, and I had a furious war to keep this honour for my fellow countrymen. Then when I got into French territory not one word did I hear of Diego Caõ or Lopez; and so as a distraction from the consideration of the private characters of people still living, I started discoursing on what I considered a safer and more interesting subject, and began to recount how I had had the honour of being personally mixed up in the monument to Diego Caõ at the mouth of the Congo, and what fine fellows—I got no farther than that, when, to my horror, I heard my heroes called microbes, followed by torrents of navigators' names, all French, and all unknown to me. Being out for information I never grumble when I get it, let it be what it may. So I asked my French friends to write down clearly on paper the names of those navigators, and promised as soon as I left the forests of the Equator, and reached the book forests of Europe, I would try and find out more about them. I have; and I own that I owe profound apologies to those truly great Frenchmen for not having made their acquaintance sooner; nevertheless I still fail to see why my

him on the value of the absence of evidence in disproving the French claim I am deeply indebted to him for the mention of references on the point.

honoured Portuguese, Diego and Lopez, should have been called microbes, and I have no regrets about my fights for the honour of the Niger for my own countrymen, nor for my constant attempts to take the conceit out of my French and Portuguese friends, as a set-off for "the conceit about England" they were always trying to take out of me, by holding forth on what those Carthaginians had done on the West Coast before France or Portugal were so much as dreamt of.

The Portuguese discoveries you can easily read of in Major's great book on Prince Henry; and as this book is fully accepted as correct by the highest Portuguese authorities, it is safer to do so than to attempt to hunt your Portuguese hero for yourself, because of the quantity of names each of them possesses, and the airy indifference as to what part of that name their national chroniclers use in speaking of them. I have tried it, and have several times been in danger of going to my grave with the idea that I was investigating the exploits of two separate gentlemen, whereas I was only dealing with two parts of one gentleman's name; nevertheless, it is a thing worth learning Portuguese for. And, in addition to Major's book, we have now, thanks to the Hakluyt Society, that superb thing, the Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea, by Gomez Eanes de Zurara—a work completed in 1453. This work is one on which we are largely dependent for the details of the early Portuguese discoveries, because Gomez Eanes spent the later part of his life in tidying up the Torre do Tombo—namely, the national archives, of which he was keeper—and his idea of tidying up included the lady-like method of destroying old papers. It makes one cold now to think of the things De Zurara may have

destroyed; but he evidently regarded himself, as does the nineteenth century spring-cleaner, as a human benefactor; and, strange to say, his contemporaries quite took his view; indeed, this job was done at the request of the Cortes, and with the Royal sanction. There is also an outstanding accusation of forgery against Zurara, but that is a minor offence, and is one we need only take into consideration when contemplating the question as to whether a man capable of destroying early manuscripts and forgery might not be also capable of leaving out of his Chronicle, in honour of the Navigator, any mention of there being Frenchmen on the Coast, when he sent out his emissaries to discover what might lay hidden from the eye of man down in the Southern Seas. I do not, however, think De Zurara left out this thing intentionally, but that he had no knowledge of it if it did exist, for no man could have written as he wrote, unless he had a heart too great for such a meanness. Certain it is Prince Henry never knew, for these are the five reasons given by Zurara, in the grave, noble splendour of his manner, why the Prince undertook the discoveries with which his name will be for ever associated. I give the passage almost in full because of its beauty. "And you should note well that the noble spirit of this Prince (Henry the Navigator) by a sort of natural constraint was ever urging him both to begin and carry out very great deeds; for which reason after the taking of Ceuta, he always kept ships well armed against the Infidel, both for war and because he also had a wish to know the land that lay beyond the Isles of Canary and that Cape called Bojador, for that up to his time neither by writings nor by the memory of man was known with any certainty the nature of the land beyond that Cape. Some said indeed Saint Brandan had passed that way,

and there was another tale of two galleys rounding the Cape which never returned . . . . and because the said Lord Infant wished to know the truth of this—since it seemed to him if he, or some other Lord, did not endeavour to gain that knowledge, no mariners or merchants would ever dare to attempt it, (for the reason that none of them ever trouble themselves to sail to a place where there is not a sure and certain hope of profit,) and seeing also that no other prince took any pains in this matter, he sent out his own ships against those parts, to have manifest certainty of them all, and to this he was stirred up by his zeal for the service of God, and of King Dom Duarto, his Lord and brother, who then reigned; and this was the first reason of his action."

"The second reason was that if there chanced to be in those lands a population of Christians or some havens into which it would be possible to sail without peril, many kinds of merchandise might be brought to this nation which would find a ready market, and reasonably so because no other people of these parts traded with them, nor yet people of any other that were known; and also the products of this nation might be taken there, which traffic would bring great profit to our countrymen."

"The third reason was that as it was said that the power of the Moors in that land of Africa was very much greater than was commonly supposed, and that there were no Christians among them nor any other race of men, and because every wise man is obliged by natural prudence to wish for a knowledge of the power of his enemy; therefore the said Lord Infant exerted himself to cause them to be fully discovered to make it known determinedly how far the power of those Infidels extended."

"The fourth reason was because during the one and thirty years he had warred against the Moors he had never found a Christian King nor a Lord outside this land, who for the love of Jesus Christ would aid him in the said war; therefore he sought to know if there were in those parts any Christian Princes in whom the charity and the love of Christ was so ingrained that they would aid him against those enemies of the Faith."

"The fifth reason was the great desire to make increase of the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to bring to Him all the souls that should be saved."

According to the Portuguese, Gil Eannes was the first emissary of Prince Henry who succeeded in passing Cape Bodajor. This feat he accomplished in 1434; but on this his first voyage out he contented himself with passing the Cape: a thing which previous expeditions of Prince Henry had failed to do, and which, so far apparently as Prince Henry knew, had not been done before, for it was regarded as a tremendous achievement.

The next year Prince Henry's cupbearer, Affonso Gonsalves Baladaya, set out accompanied by Gil Eannes in a caravel; and the coast to the South of Bojador was visited; their furthest expedition was to a shallow bay called by them Angra des Ruives.[1] They then returned to Portugal, and the

[1] This is an interesting case of the alteration that has taken place in Portuguese place names in West Africa. Angra des Ruives in English is Gurnard Bay, and this name was given to it by the Portuguese because of the quantity of this fish found there. In the *West African Pilot* you find the place called Garnet Bay, and the *Pilot* says "fish are abundant"; but as it does not say that garnets abound there, nor that it was discovered by Lord Wolseley, I think there is reason to believe that its name is Gurnard Bay, in translation of Angra des Ruives.

next year again went down the coast as far as a galley-shaped rock. This place they called Pedro de Galli, from its appearance; its present name is Pedra de Galla. Their chief achievement was the discovery of the Rio do Oura. It is not an important river in itself, but only one of those deceptive estuaries common on the West coast. But it was the first West African place the Portuguese got gold dust at, hence its name. The amount of gold was apparently not considerable, and the chief cargo that expedition took home was sea wolves' skins; they reported quantities of seals or sea wolves as they called them here, and this report was the cause of the next Portuguese expedition; for the Portuguese in those days seem to have always been anxious for sea wolves' oil and skins; and whether this be a survival or no, it seems to me curious that the ladies of Lisbon are to this day very keen on sealskin jackets, which their climate can hardly call for imperatively. But, however this may be, it is certain that we have no account of the Portuguese having passed south of the next important cape South of Bojador, namely, Blanco, before 1443. The terrible tragedy of Tangiers and political troubles hindered their explorations from 1436 to 1441,[1] and the French claim to have been down the West Coast trading not only before this date, but before Prince Henry sent a single expedition out at all, namely, as early as 1346.

The French story is that there was a deed of association of the merchants of Dieppe and Rouen of the date 1364. This deed was to arrange for the carrying on to greater proportions of their already existing trade with West Africa. The original of this deed was burnt, according to

[1] *Prince Henry the Navigator;* Major.

Labat, at Dieppe, in the conflagration of 1694.[1] How long before this Association was formed that trade had been carried on, it is a little difficult to make out, I find, from the usual hindrance to the historical study of West Africa, namely, lack of documentary evidence and a profusion of recriminatory lying. This association was under the patronage of the Dukes of Normandy, then Kings of England; and its ultimate decay is partly attributed to the political difficulties these patrons became involved in. The French authorities say the Association was an exceedingly flourishing affair; and it is stated that under its auspices factories were established at Sierra Leone, and that a fort was built at La Mina del Ore, or Del Mina, the place now known as Elmina, as early as 1382. Now it is round the subject of this fort that most controversy wages, for this French statement does not at all agree with the Portuguese account of the fort. The latter claim to have discovered the coast—called by them La Mina, by us the Gold—in 1470, with an expedition commanded by João de Santarim and Pedro de Escobara. The Portuguese, finding this part of the coast rich in gold, and knowing the grabbing habits of other nations where this was concerned, determined to secure this trade for themselves in a sound practical way, although they were already guarded by a Papal Bull. The expedition that discovered La Mina was the last one made during the reign of Affonso V.; but his son, who succeeded him as João II., rapidly set about acting on the information it brought home. This king indeed took an intelligent interest in the Guinea trade, and was well versed in it; for a part of his revenues before he came to the

[1] Labat, *Afrique occidentale*, vol. iv. p. 8. 1724.

throne had been derived from it and its fisheries. João II. energetically pushed on the enterprise founded by his father Affonso V., who had in 1469 rented the trade of the Guinea Coast to Fernam Gomez for five years at 500 equizodas a year,[1] on the condition that 100 leagues of new coast should be discovered annually, starting from Sierra Leone, the then furthest known part, and reserving the ivory trade to the Crown. The expedition sent out by King João, commanded by the celebrated Diego de Azambuja, took with it, in ten caravels and two smaller craft, ready fashioned stones and bricks, and materials for building, with the intention of building a fort as near as might be to a place called Sama, where the previous expedition had reported gold dust to be had from the natives. This fort was to be a means of keeping up a constant trade with the natives, instead of depending only on the visits of ships to the coast. Azambuja selected the place we know now as Elmina as a suitable site for this fort. Having obtained a concession of the land from the King Casamanca, on representing to him what an advantage it would be to him to have such a strong place wherein he and his people could seek security against their enemies, and which would act as a constant market place for his trade, and a storehouse for the Portuguese goods, Azambuja lost no time in building the fort with his ready-fashioned materials, and not only the fort, but a church as well. Both were dedicated to San Gorge da Mina, and a daily mass was instituted to be said therein for the repose of the soul of the great Prince Henry the Navigator, whose body had been laid to rest in November, 1460. Indeed, one cannot but be struck with the wealth of Portuguese information that we possess, regarding the

[1] Equal to nearly £30 English per annum.

building of the castle at Elmina and by the good taste shown by the Portuguese throughout; for, besides establishing this mass—a mass that should be said in all Catholic churches on the West African Coast to this day in memory of the great man whose enterprise first opened up that great, though terrible region, to the civilised world—King João granted many franchises and privileges to people who would go and live at San Gorge da Mina, and aid in expanding the trade and civilisation of the surrounding region, which is as it should be; for people who go and live in West Africa for the benefit of their country deserve all these things, and money down as well. Having done these, the king evidently thought he deserved some honour himself, which he certainly did, so he called himself Lord of Guinea, and commanded that all subsequent discoverers should take possession of the places they discovered in a more substantial way than heretofore; for it had been their custom merely to erect wooden crosses or to carve on trees the motto of Prince Henry, *Talent de bien faire.* The monuments King João commanded should be erected in place of these transient emblems he designed himself; they were to be square pillars of stone six feet high, with his arms upon them, and two inscriptions on opposite sides, in Latin and Portuguese respectively, containing the exact date when the discovery of the place was made; by his order the cross that was to be on each was to be of iron and cramped into the pedestal. Major says the cross was to surmount the structure; but my Portuguese friends tell me it was to be in the pedestal, and also that the remains of these old monuments are still to be seen in their possessions; so we must presume that the outfit for an exploring expedition in King João's days included a

considerable cargo of ready-dressed stones and materials for monuments, and that from the quantity of discoveries these expeditions made, the sixteenth century Portuguese homeward bound must have been flying as light as the Cardiff bound collier of to-day.

Still it is remarkable that with all the wealth of detail that we have of these Portuguese discoveries in the fifteenth century there is no mention of the French being on the coast before Pedro do Cintra reaches Sierra Leone and calls it by this name because of the thunder on the mountains roaring like a lion, and so on; but he says nothing of French factories ashore. Azambuja gives quantities of detail regarding the building of San Gorge da Mina, but never says a word about there being already at this place a French fort; yet Sieur Villault, Escuyer, Sieur de Bellfond,[1] speaks of it with detail and certainty. Also M. Robbe says that one of the ships sent out by the association of merchants in 1382 was called the *Virgin*, that she got as far as Kommenda, and thence to the place where Mina stands, and that next year they built at this place a strong house, in which they kept ten or twelve of their men to secure it; and they were so fortunate in this settlement that in 1387 the colony was considerably enlarged, and did a good trade until 1413, when, owing to the wars in France, the store of these adventurers being exhausted, they were obliged to quit not only Mina, but their other settlements, as Sestro Paris, Cape Mount, Sierra Leone, and Cape Verde.

Villault, who went to West Africa to stir up the French to renew the Guinea trade, openly laments the folly of the

[1] *A Relation of the Coasts of Africa called Guinea collected by Sieur Villault, Escuyer, Sieur de Bellfond, in the years* 1666–1667. London: John Starkey, 1670.

French in ever having abandoned it owing to certain prejudices they had taken against the climate. His account of it is that about the year 1346 some adventurers of Dieppe, a port in Normandy, who as descendants of the Normans, were well used to long voyages, sailed along the coast of the negroes, Guinea, and settled several colonies in those parts, particularly about Cape Verde, in the Bay of Rio Fesco, and along the Melequeta coast. To the Bay, which extends from Cape Ledo to Cape Mount they gave the name of the Bay of France; that of Petit Dieppe to the village of Rio Corso (between Rio France and Rio Sestro); that of Sestro Paris to Grand Sestro, not far from Cape Palmas; while they carried to France great quantities of Guinea pepper and elephants' tusks, whence the inhabitants of Dieppe set up the trade of turning ivory and making several useful works, as combs, for which they grew famous, and still continue so. Villault also speaks of "a fair church still in being" at Elmina, adorned with the arms of France, and also says that the chief battery to the sea is called by the natives La Battarie de France; and he speaks of the affection the natives have for France, and says they beat their drums in the French manner. Barbot also speaks of the affection of the natives for the French, and says that on his last voyage in 1682 the king sent him his second son as hostage, if he would come up to Great Kommondo, and treat about settling in his country, although he had refused the English and the Dutch. Barbot, however, does not agree with Villault about the prior rights of France to the discovery of Guinea; he thinks that if these facts be true it is strange that there is no mention of so important an enterprise in French historians, and concludes that it would be unjust to the Portuguese to

attribute the first discovery of this part of the world to the French. He also thinks it evidence against it that the Portuguese historians are silent on the point, and that Azambuja, when he began to build his castle at Elmina in 1484, never mentions there being a castle there that had been built by Frenchmen in 1385. This, however, I think is not real evidence against the prior right of France. Take, for instance, the examples you get constantly when reading the books of Portuguese and Dutch writers on Guinea. You cannot fail to be struck how they ignore each other's existence as much as possible when credit is to be given; indeed were it not for the necessity they feel themselves under of abusing each other, I am sure they would do so altogether, but this they cannot resist. Here is a sample of what the Portuguese say of the Dutch: "That the rebels (meaning the Dutch) gained more from the blacks by drunkenness, giving them wine and strong liquors, than by force of arms, and instructing them as ministers of the Devil in their wickedness. But that their dissolute lives and manners, joined to the advantage which the Portuguese at Mina, though inferior in numbers, had gained over them in some rencontres, had rendered them as contemptible among the blacks for their cowardice as want of virtue. That however the blacks, being a barbarous people, susceptible of first impressions, readily enough swallowed Calvin's poison (Protestantism), as well as took off the merchandise which the Dutch, taking advantage of the Portuguese indolence sold along the coast, where they were become absolute pirates." Then, again, the same author says, "The quantity of merchandises brought by the Dutch and their cheapness, has made the barbarians greedy of them, although persons of quality and honour assured them that they would

willingly pay double for Portuguese goods, as suspecting the Dutch to be of less value, buying them only for want of better."[1] I could give you also some beautiful examples of what the Dutch say of the Portuguese and the English, and of what the French say of both, but I have not space; moreover, it is all very like what you can read to-day in things about rival nations and traders out in West Africa. I myself was commonly called by the Portuguese there a pirate because I was English, and that was the proper thing to call the English,—there was no personal incivility meant; and I quote the above passage just to impress on you that when you are reading about West African affairs, either ancient or modern, you must make allowance for this habit of speaking of rival nations—it is the climate. And although the Portuguese and the Dutch may choose to ignore the French early discoveries, yet they both showed a keen dread of the French from their being so popular with the natives, and did their utmost to oust them from the West Coast, which they succeeded in doing for a long period. And then again to this day, when a trader in West Africa finds a place where trade is good, he does not cable home to the newspapers about it. If it is necessary that any lying should be done about that place he does it himself; but what he strives most to do is to keep its existence totally unknown to other people; sooner or later some other trader comes along and discovers it, and then that place becomes unhealthy for one or the other of its discoverers,—and that is the climate again. Thus by the light of my own dispassionate observations in West Africa, I am quite ready to believe in that early French discovery; and I

[1] Vas Conselo's *Life of King João.*

quite agree with Villault about the quantity of words derived from the French that you will find to this day among the native tongues, and even in the trade English of the Coast, and in districts that have not been under French sway in the historical memory of man. One of these words is the word "ju ju," always regarded by the natives as a foreign word. Their own word for religion, or more properly speaking for sacred beings, is "bosum," or "woka." They only say "ju ju" so that you white man may understand. The percentage, however, of Portuguese words in trade English is higher than that of French.

After the fifteenth century it is not needful now to discuss in detail the subject of the French presence in West Africa; for both Dutch and Portuguese freely own to the presence there of the Frenchmen, and openly state that they were a source of worry and expense to them, owing to the way the natives preferred the French to either of themselves.

The whole subject of the French conquests in Africa is an exceedingly interesting one, and one I would gladly linger over, for there is in it that fascination that always lies in a subject which contains an element of mystery. The element of mystery in this affair is, why France should have persisted so in the matter—why she should have spent blood and money on it to the extent she has, does, and I am sure will continue to do, without its ever having paid her in the past, or paying her now, or being likely to pay her in the future, as far as one can see. There are moments when it seems to me clear enough why she has done it all; but these moments only come when I am in an atmosphere reeking of La Gloire or La France—a thing I own I much enjoy; but when I am back in the cold intellectual greyness of commercial England, France's conduct

in Africa certainly seems a little strange and curious, and far more inexplicable than it was when one was oneself personally risking one's life and ruining one's clothes, after a beetle in the African bush. I really think it is this sporting instinct in me that enables me to understand France in Africa at all; and which gives me a thrill of pleasure when I read in the newspapers of her iniquitous conduct in turning up, flag and baggage, in places where she had no legal right to be, or, worse still, being found in possession of bits of other nations' hinterland when a representative of the other arrives there with the intention of discovering it, and to his disgust and alarm finds the most prominent object in the landscape is the blue to the mast, blood to the last, flag of France, with a fire-and-flames Frenchman under it, possessed of a pretty gift of writing communications to the real owner of that hinterland—a respectable representative of England or Germany—communications threatening him with immediate extinction, and calling him a filibuster and an assassin, and things like that. For the life of me I cannot help a "Go it, Sall, and I'll hold your bonnit" feeling towards the Frenchman. It is not my fault entirely. Gladly would I hold my own countryman's bonnet, only he won't go it if I do; so I have to content myself with the knowledge that England has made the West Coast pay, and that she certainly did beat the Dutch and Portuguese off the Coast in a commercial war. Still she will never beat France off in that way, because the French interest in Africa is not a commercial one. France can and will injure our commerce in West Africa, in all probability she will ultimately extinguish it, if things go on as they are going, while we cannot hit back and injure her commercial prosperity there because she has none to injure.

There is also another point of great interest, and that is the different effect produced by the governmental interference of the two nations in expansion of territory. That the expansion of trade, and spheres of influence are concurrent in this region is now recognised by our own Government;[1] although the Government somewhat flippantly remarks "possibly too late." It is, in my opinion, certainly too late as regards both Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast; but yet we see small evidence of our Government taking themselves seriously in the matter, or of their feeling a regret for having failed to avail themselves of the work done for England on the West Coast by some of the noblest men of our blood. I have often heard it said it was a sad thing for an Englishman to contemplate our West African possessions, save one, the Royal Niger; but I am sure it is a far sadder thing for an Englishwoman who is full of the pride of her race, and who well knows that that pride can only be justified by its men, to see on the one hand the splendid achievements of Mungo Park, the two Landers, the men who held the Gold Coast for England when the Government abandoned it after the battle of Katamansu, of Winwood Reade who, in the employ of Messrs. Swanzy, won the right to the Niger behind Sierra Leone, and many others; and on the other hand to see the map of West Africa to-day, which shows only too clearly that the English Government's last chance of saving the honour of England lies in their supporting the Royal Niger Company.

It seems that as soon as a West Coast region falls under direct governmental control with us a process of petrification sets in, and a policy of international amiability and

[1] Duke of Devonshire's speech at Liverpool, June, 1897.

Reubenism, for which we have Scriptural authority to expect nothing but failure. It was of course necessary for our Government to take charge in West Africa when the partitioning of that continent took place; but I fail to admire those men who at the Council Board of Europe lost for England what had been won for her by better, braver men. Still it is no use, in these weird un-Shakespearian times, for any one to use strong language, so I'll turn to the consideration of the advance made in West Africa by France; for any one can understand how a woman must admire the deeds of brave men and the backing up of those deeds by a brave Government.

The earlier history of the French occupation of Africa is that of a series of commercial companies, who all came to a bad end. Of the Association of the Merchants of Dieppe and Rouen in the fourteenth century I have already spoken; and whatever may be the difficulty of proving its existence in 1364, there is, I believe, no one who doubts that it had an existence that terminated in 1664. The French authorities ascribe its fall to the wars in France that succeeded the death of Charles VI, 1392, and to the death of some of the principal merchants belonging to it; but "the greatest cause of all was that many who had gotten vast riches began to be ashamed of the name of traders, although to that they owed their fortunes, and allying with the nobility set up as quality," and neglected business in the usual way, when this happens. The most flourishing settlements went into decay, and were abandoned all save one, on the Isle of Sanaga, or what Labat calls the Niger, the river we now call the Senegal.[1]

[1] Labat. At present the Isle of St. Louis, and what is called the Niger, is the river Sanaga—or Senega and Senegal, as the French corrupt it.—Astley, 1745.

This French settlement is to this day one of the main French ports in Africa, and it has remained in their possession, with the brief interval of falling into the hands of the English for a few months.

The company that took over the enterprise of this Rouen and Dieppe Association in 1664 was called the Compagnie des Indes Occidentales; it paid for the stock and rights of the previous association the sum of 150,000 livres, and it had tremendous ambitions, for not only did it buy up the West African enterprise, but also the rights of the lords proprietors in the isles of Martinique, Guadaloupe, St. Christopher, Santa Cruz, and Maria Galanta in the West Indies. This company came to a sad end when it had still thirty years of its charter to run; in 1673 it sold its remaining term of West African rights to a new company called d'Afrique for 7500 livres. Its West Indian possessions the king seized in 1674, and united them with the Crown.

Its successor, the Compagnie d'Afrique, started with its thirty years' charter, and all the great ambitions of its predecessor. The king gave it every assistance in the way of ships and troops to carry out its designs; and it availed itself of these, for finding its trade incommoded by the Dutch, who were then settled at Anguin and Goree in 1677, it got the king to remove the Dutch nuisance from Goree by an expedition under Count d'Estras, and in 1678, by an expedition of its own, under M. de Casse, it cleared the Dutch out of Anguin.

This company also made many treaties with the native chiefs. In 1679, by means of treaty with the chiefs of Rio Fresco, nowadays barbarously spelt Rufisque, and Portadali, now Portindal, and Joal, whose name is still uninjured, it acquired rights over all the territory be-

tween Cape Verde and the Gambia;[1] an exclusion from there of all other traders, and an exemption from all customs; and in addition to these enterprises it entered into a contract with the King of France to provide him with 2,000 negroes per annum for his West Indian Islands, and as many more as he might require for use in the galleys. Shortly after this the Compagnie d'Afrique expired in bankruptcy, compounding with its creditors at the rate of 5*s.* in the £, which I presume was paid mainly out of the 1,010,000 livres for which it sold its claim to its successors. The successors were a little difficult to find at first, for there seems to have been what one might call distaste for West African commercial enterprise among the French public just then. However, a company was got together to buy up its rights, accept its responsibilities and carry on business in 1681.

In the matter of the company that succeeded the d'Afrique, confusion is added to catastrophe, owing to the then Minister of State, M. Seignelay, for some private end, having divided up the funds and created two separate companies,—one to have the trade from Cape Blanco and the Gambia—the Compagnie du Senegal; the other to hold the rest of the Guinea trade to the Cape of Good Hope, the Compagnie du Guinea. This arrangement, of course, left the Senegal Company with all the responsibility of the compagnie d'Afrique, and without sufficient funds to deal with them; and the Compagnie du Senegal complained, when, in 1694, it found its affairs in much confusion, throwing the blame on the Government; but, says Astley, "the great are seldom without excuses for what they do," and the

[1] An extent of thirty leagues and six leagues within the land.—Labat, p. 19.

division of the concession was persisted in, on the grounds that when the company that succeeded d'Afrique was intact it failed to fulfil the Government contract of sending 2,000 negroes annually to the West Indies; and also that it had not imported as much gold from Africa as it might have done. Against this the Directors remonstrated loudly, saying that, during the two years and a half during which they had been responsible for exporting negroes to the West Indies, they had supplied 4,560 negroes, that the register of the Mint proved they had sent home in three years 400 marks of gold, and that it had cost them 400,000 livres to re-establish the trade of the Compagnie d'Afrique, for which they had already paid more than it was worth. All they got by these complaints was an extension of their trade rights from Gambia to Sierra Leone and a confirmation of their monopoly in exporting negroes to the French West Indies, and of their rights to Anguin and Goree, that is to say, a promise of Government assistance if those Dutch should come and attempt to reinstate themselves to the incommodation of French commerce.

All this however did not avail to make the Compagnie du Senegal flourish, so in 1694 it sold its remaining seventeen years of rights for 300,000 livres, to Sieur d'Apougny, one of the old Directors; and this enterprising man secured the assistance of eighteen new shareholders, and obtained from the Crown a new charter, and started afresh under the name of the "Compagnie du Senegal, Cap Nord et Coté d'Afrique." It did not prosper; nevertheless it may be regarded as having produced the founder of modern Senegal, for it sent out to attend to its affairs, when things were in a grievous mess, one of the greatest

men who have ever gone from Europe to Africa—namely, Sieur Brüe.

The name of this company of Sieur d'Apougny was d'Afrique; and the usual thing happened to it in 1709, when, for 250,000 livres, it made over its rights to a set of Rouen merchants, reserving, however, to itself the right of carrying on certain branches of the trade for which it held Government contracts; failing to carry these out they were taken from it and handed over to the company of Rouen merchants, who succumbed to their liabilities in 1717. Their rights were then bought up, for 1,600,000 livres, by the already established Mississippi Company of Paris—a company which survived until 1758.

In 1758 the English again captured St. Louis, the French main post in Senegal. In 1779 the French recaptured it, and it was ceded to them by England officially in the treaty of 1783. This was merely the usual kind of international amenity prevalent on the West Coast in those days. Dutch, French, English, Danes, Portuguese, and Courlanders would gallantly seize each other's property out there, while their respective Governments at home, if the matter were brought before their notice, and it was apparently worth their while, disowned all knowledge of their representatives' villainies and returned the booty to the prior owner on paper. The aggrieved Power then engaged in the difficult undertaking of regaining possession; the said original villain knowing little and caring less about the arrangements made on the point by his home Government. But just at this period England dealt French trade a frightful blow. The whole of her iniquity took the form of one John Law, a native of Edinburgh,[1] who raised himself to the dignity of comp-

[1] John Law was the eldest son of an Edinburgh goldsmith, born about 1681. "Bred to no business, but possessed of great abilities,

troller-general of the finance of France by a specious scheme for a bank, an East India Company and a Mississippi Company, by the profits of which the French national debt was to be paid off, a thing then in urgent need of doing, and every one connected with the affair was to make their fortunes, an undertaking always in need of doing in any country. The French Government gave him every encouragement, and in 1716 he opened the bank; in 1719 the shares of that bank were worth more than eighty times the current specie in France; in 1720 that bank burst, spreading commercial ruin. To this may be ascribed the period of paralysis in the Senegal trade from 1719. The Compagnie de Senegal had handed over their interest to the Mississippi Company involved in John Law's bank scheme. After this, up to 1817, France like F. M. the Duke of Wellington anent playing upon the harp, "had other things to do" than attend to West Africa. During the Napoleonic Wars England took all the French possessions in West Africa, but by the treaty of Paris of 1814 she handed back those in Senegal, save the Gambia. The French

and a fertile invention," he, when very young, recommended himself to the King's ministers in Scotland to arrange fiscal matters, then in some confusion from the union of the Kingdoms. His scheme, however, was not adopted. Great at giving other people good advice on money matters, he failed to manage his own. After a gay career in Edinburgh, and gaining himself the title of "Beau Law," he got mixed up in a duel, and fled to the Continent. He was banished from Venice and Genoa for draining the youth of those cities of their money, and wandered about Italy, living on gaming and singular bets and wagers. He proposed his scheme to the Duke of Savoy, who saw by this scheme he could soon, by deceiving his subjects in this manner, get the whole of the money of the kingdom into his possession; but as Law could not explain what would happen then, he was repulsed, and proceeded to Paris, where, under the patronage of the Duc d'Orleans, they found favour with Louis XIV. When his crash came he was exiled, and died in Venice in 1729.

vessel sent out to take over the territory was the ill-starred and ill-navigated *Méduse*. Owing to her wreck it was not until 1817 that France replaced officially her standard on this Coast. On the 25th of January of that year, and represented by Colonel Smaltz, she again entered into possession of Goree and St. Louis in the mouth of the Senegal, which was practically all she had, and that was in a very unsatisfactory state. Colonel Smaltz, in 1819, had to come to an agreement with the Oulof chief of the St Louis district to pay him a subsidy, but a mere catalogue of the wars between the French and the Oulofs is not necessary here; they were mutually unsatisfactory until there enters on the scene that second great founder of the French power in Africa, General Faidherbe, in 1854. Faidherbe is indeed the founder; but had it not been for Sieur Brüe and his travels far into the interior, and the evidence he collected regarding the riches therein, and of the general value of the country, it is not likely that, as things were in 1854, France would have troubled herself so much about extending her power in Senegal.

Faidherbe was also one of those men who get possessed by a belief in the future of West Africa, regardless of any state of dilapidation they may find it in, and who have the power of infusing their enthusiasm into the minds of others; and he roused France to the importance of Senegal, saying prophetically, "Our possession on the West Coast of Africa is possibly the one of all our colonies that has before it the greatest future, and it deserves the whole sympathy and attention of the Empire."

These were words more likely to inspire France or any other reasonable Power with a desire to give Senegal attention, than those used by the previous French visitor

there, M. Sanguin, in 1785, who, speaking of the island of St. Louis, says it consists entirely of burning sands on whose barren surface you sometimes meet with scattered flints thrown out among their ballast by ships, and the ruins of buildings formerly erected by Europeans; but he remarks it is not surprising the sands are barren, for the air is so strongly impregnated with salt, which pervades everything and consumes even iron in a very short space of time. The heat he reports unpleasant, and rendered thus more so by the reflection from the sand. If the island were not all it might be, one might still hope for better things ashore on the mainland, but not according to M. Sanguin. The mainland is covered with sand and overrun with mangles, not the sort, you understand, that vulgar little English boys used to state their mothers had sold and invested the money in a barrel organ, but what we now call mangroves; then, mentioning that the St. Louis water supply was the cause of most of those maladies which carry off the Europeans so rapidly, that at the end of every three years the colony has a fresh set of inhabitants, M. Sanguin discourses on the charms of West African night entertainments in a most feeling and convincing way, stating that there was an infinity of gnats called mosquitoes, which exist in incredible quantities. He does not mind them himself, oh dear no! being a sort of savage, he says, totally indifferent to the impression he may create in the fair sex, so that, if you please, he smears himself over with butter, which preserves him from the mosquitoes' impertinent stings. How he came by a sufficiency of butter for this purpose I won't pretend to know; but he knew mosquitoes, for impertinent is a perfect word for them. M. Sanguin, however, was not the sort of man,

with all his ability and enterprise, to advertise Senegal successfully to France. Whatever Frenchman would care to go to a land where he needs must be sufficiently indifferent to the fair sex to smear himself with butter! Dire and awful dangers and miscellaneous horrors, even to being carried off by maladies among mangles in an atmosphere stiff with mosquitoes, but not that!

Now Faidherbe was different. Remember to the honour of the man he started with the above-described environment, but he took the grand tone and did not dwell on local imperfections; the burning sands of Senegal he mentioned, as all who know them are, by a natural constraint, forced, as Azurara would say, to do, but he said our intentions are pure and noble, our cause is just, the future cannot fail us;[1] and with such words, to his credit and to the credit of La France, he spoke to her heart; and he spoke truly, for with all its failures, with all the fearful loss of the lives of Frenchmen, Senegal is a grand thing, and it is a great thing for France, for from it has risen her masterdom over the Western Soudan—a work also inaugurated by Faidherbe, through his support of Lieutenant Maze, who reached the Niger. Practical in his work, Faidherbe was also—by rebuilding the fort at Medina—the annexation of the Oulof country (1856); the institution of a battalion of native Tirailleurs (1857); the telegraph line between St. Louis and Goree (1862); the construction of the harbour at Darkar and the erection of a first-class lighthouse at Cape Verd (1864); and the annexation of the kingdom of Cayore (1865). A grand record! and one that would be grander for France were it not for the

[1] *Notice de Senegal*, Paris, 1859, p. 99.

mismanagement that followed Faidherbe's rule in commercial and financial matters.

The want of financial success in her enterprise in West Africa is a matter that has constantly irritated France. She is continually saying: "English possessions on that Coast pay, why should not mine?" It is not my business to obtrude on her an answer, I merely dwell on the subject because I clearly see there are creeping nowadays into our own methods of managing Africa, those very same causes of financial failure that have afflicted her, namely, too high tariffs, too exaggerated views of the immediate profits to be got from those regions, and certain unfair methods of dealing with natives.

In attempting, however, to account for the trade from the French possessions in West Africa being proportionately so small to the immense area of country, the make of the country and its native inhabitants must be taken into consideration. Enormous districts of the French possessions are, to put it mildly, not fertile, and capable of producing in the way of a marketable commodity only gum, which is gathered from the stems of the acacia horrida. It is an excellent gum, and there is plenty of this acacia, and other gum-yielding acacias, but pickers are not so plentiful, particularly now French authorities object to native enterprise taking the form of raiding districts for slaves to employ in the industry. Other enormous districts, however, are as fertile as need be, and densely forested with forests rich in magnificent timber and rubber wealth. The inhabitants, a most important factor in the prosperity or otherwise, of West African regions, are varied, but roughly speaking, we may say France possesses the whole

of the tawny Moors, and tawny Moors have their good points and their bad. Their good point, from our present point of view, is their commercial enterprise. From the earliest historical account we have of them to the present day, it has been their habit to suck the trade out of the rich and fertile districts, carry it across the desert, and trade it with the white Moors, who, in their turn, carried it to the Mediterranean and Red Sea ports. The opening of the West Coast seaboard trade, inaugurated by the Portuguese, has acted as a commercial loss to the tawny Moors during the past 400 years, and must be held, in a measure, accountable for the decay of the great towns of Timbuctoo, Jenne, Mele, and so on, though only in a measure, for herein comes the bad point of the inhabitants of the Western Soudan, from our point of view, namely, their devotion to religious differences and politics, which prevents their attending to business. As this state of internecine war came on about the same period as the opening to the black Moors and negroes of a market direct with European traders in the Bight of Benin, it hurried the tawny Moors to commercial decay. Timbuctoo never recovered the blow dealt her by the Moorish conquest in 1591. At the breaking up of the Empire of Askia the Great, revolt and war raged through the region, Jenne revolted in the west, an example followed by the Touaregs Fulah and Malinkase tribes. Both north and south were thrown into confusion, and Timbuctoo, their intermediary, finding her commerce injured, rebelled in her turn. She was conquered and brutally repressed by the Moorish conquerors in 1594. A terrible dearth provoked by a lack of rain visited the town, and her inhabitants were reduced to eating the corpses

of animals, and even of men. This was followed by the pestilence of 1618,[1] but through this arose any quantity of wars and upheavals of political authority among the tawny Moors in the early days of European intercourse with the West African Coast. They assumed a more acute, religious form in our own century, or to be more accurate just at the end of the eighteenth, when Shazkh Utham Danfodio arose among the Fulahs as a religious reformer, and a warrior missionary. He was a great man at both, but as a disturber of traffic still greater, a thing that cannot be urged to so great an extent against the other great Muslam missionary Umaru l'Haji. Still his gathering together an army of 20,000 men in 1854–55, and going about with them on a series of proselytizing expeditions against any tribe in the Upper Niger and Senegal region he found to be in an unconverted state, was little better than a nuisance to the French authorities at that time. Danfodio's affairs have fallen into the hands of England to arrange, and very efficiently her great representative in West Africa, the Royal Niger Company, has arranged them. But for our Danfodio and his consequences, France has had twenty, and she has dealt with them both gallantly and patiently. But there will always be, as far as one can see, trouble for France with her tawny Moors, now that the sources of their support are cut off from them by many of the districts they once drew their trade from—the sea-board districts of the Benin Bight, like Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast and Lagos, in the English Niger—being in the hands of a nation whose commercial instincts enable it to see the benefits of lower tariffs than France affects. Even were our tariffs to

[1] For an interesting account of Timbuctoo and its history, see *Timbuctoo the Mysterious*, by M. Felix Dubois. 1897.

be raised to-morrow, the trade would again begin to drain back into the hands of its old owners, the tawny Moors, for the Western Soudan is being pacified by France. If some way is not devised of providing the tawny Moors with trade sufficient to keep them, things must go badly there, owing to the unfertility of the greater part of their country and the increase of the population arising from the pacification of the Western Soudan, which France is effecting. I will dwell no longer on this sketch of the history of the advance of France in Western Africa. We in England cannot judge it fairly. Nationally, her honour there is our disgrace; commercially, her presence is our ruin.

Two things only stand out from these generalisations. The Royal Niger Company shows how great England can be when she is incarnate in a great man, for the Royal Niger Company is so far Sir George Taubman-Goldie. The other thing that stands out unstained by comatose indifference to the worth of West Africa to England is her Commerce as represented by her West Coast traders, who have held on to the Coast since the sixteenth century with a bulldog grip, facing death and danger, fair weather and foul. Fine things both these two things are, but they do not understand each other; they would certainly not understand me regarding their affairs were I to talk from June to January, so I won't attempt to, but speak to the general public, who so far have understood neither Sir George Goldie, nor the West Coast trader, nor for the matter of that their mutual foe France, and I beg to say that France has not been so destructive an enemy to England there as England's own folly has been as incarnate in the parliamentary resolution of 1865; that the achievements of France in exploration in the West-

ern Soudan make one of the grandest pages of all European efforts in Africa; that the influence of France over the natives has been, is, and, I believe, will remain good. "Our intentions are pure and noble, our cause is just, the future cannot fail us," said Faidherbe. So far as the natives are concerned, this has been the policy of France in Western Africa. So far as diplomatic relations with ourselves, humanly speaking, it has not; but diplomacy is diplomacy, and the amount of probity—justice—in diplomacy is a thing that would not at any period cover a threepenny-bit. It is a form of war that shows no blood, but which has not in it those things which sanctify red war, honour and chivalry. Nevertheless, diplomacy is an essential thing in this world; it does good work, it saves life, it increases prosperity, it advances the cause of religion and knowledge, and therefore the World must not be hard on it for its being—what it is. Personally, I prefer contemplating other things, and so I turn to Commerce.

[*To face page* 281.

ST. PAUL DO LOANDA.

CHAPTER XII

COMMERCE IN WEST AFRICA

Concerning the reasons that deter this writer from entering here on a general history of the English, Dutch and Portuguese in Western Africa; to which is added some attempt to survey the present state of affairs there.

LACK of space, not lack of interest, prevents me from sketching the careers of other nations in West Africa even so poorly as I have that of France; but the truth is, the material for the history of the other nations is so enormous that in order to present it with anything approaching clearness or fairness, folio volumes are required. I have a theory of the proper way to write the history of all European West African enterprises—a theory I shall endeavour to put into practice if I am ever cast ashore on an uninhabited island, with a suitable library, a hogshead of ink, a few tons of writing paper, accompanied by pens, and at least a quarter of a century of uninterrupted calm at my disposal. The theory itself is short, so I can state it here. Pay no attention to the nasty things they say about each other—it's the climate.

The history of the Portuguese occupation of West Africa is the great one. The material for its early geographico-historical side is in our hands, owing to the ability of Mr. Major and his devotion to the memory of Prince Henry

the Navigator. But the history of Portugal in West Africa from the days of the Navigator onwards wants writing. Sir A. B. Ellis fortunately gives us, in his history of the Gold Coast, an account of the part that Portugal played there, but, except for this region, you must hunt it up second-hand in the references made to it by prejudiced rivals, or in scattered Portuguese books and manuscripts. While as for the commercial history of Portugal in West Africa, although it has been an unbroken one from the fifteenth century to our own time, it has so far not been written at all. This seems to me all the more deplorable, because it is full of important lessons for those nations who are now attempting to exploit the regions she first brought them into contact with.

It must be noted, for one thing, that Portugal was the first European nation to tackle Africa in what is now by many people considered the legitimate way, namely, by direct governmental control. Other nations left West African affairs in the hands of companies of merchant adventurers and private individuals for centuries. Nevertheless, Portugal is nowadays unpopular among the other nations engaged in exploiting Africa. I shrink from embroiling myself in controversy, but I am bound to say I think she has become unpopular on account of prejudice, coupled with that strange moral phenomenon that makes men desirous of persuading themselves that a person they have treated badly deserves such treatment.

The more powerful European nations have dealt scandalously, from a moral standpoint, with Portugal in Africa. This one could regard calmly, it being in the nature of powerful nations to do this sort of thing, were it not for the airs they give themselves ; and to hear them

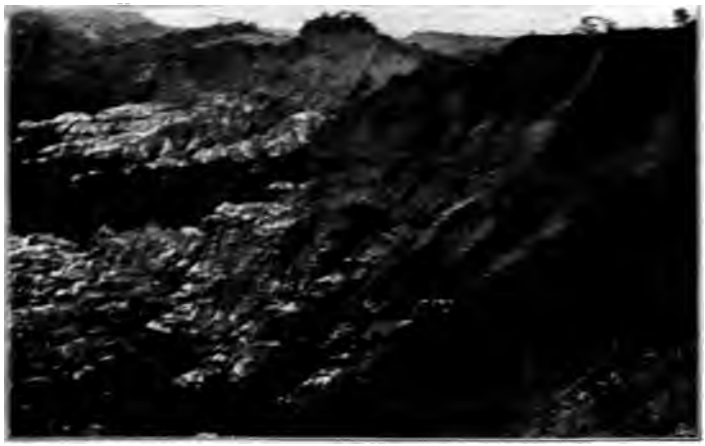
talking nowadays about Portugal's part in African history is enough to make the uninitiated imagine that the sweet innocent things have no past of their own, and never knew the price of black ivory.

"Oh, but that is all forgiven and forgotten, and Portugal is just what she always was at heart," you say. Well, Portugal at heart was never bad, as nations go. Her slaving record is, in the point of humanity to the cargo, the best that any European nation can show who has a slaving West African past at all.

The thing she is taxed with nowadays mainly is that she does not develope her possessions. Developing African possessions is the fashion, so naturally Portugal, who persists on going about in crinoline and poke bonnet style, gets jeered at. This is right in a way, so long as we don't call it the high moral view and add to it libel. I own that my own knowledge of Portuguese possessions forces me to regard those possessions as in an unsatisfactory state from an imperialistic standpoint; a grant made by the home government for improvements, say roads, has a tendency to—well, not appear as a road. Some one—several people possibly—is all the better and happier for that grant; and after all if you do not pay your officials regularly, and they are not Englishmen, you must take the consequences. Even when an honest endeavour is made to tidy things up, a certain malign influence seems to dodge its footsteps in a Portuguese possession. For example, when I was out in '93, Portugal had been severely reminded by other nations that this was the Nineteenth Century. Bom Dios—Bother it, I suppose it is—says Portugal—must do something to smarten up dear Angola. She is over 400 now, and hasn't had any new frocks since

the slave trade days; perhaps they are right, and it's time this dear child came out. So Loanda, Angola, was ordered street lamps—stylish things street lamps!—a telephone, and a water supply. Now, say what you please, Loanda is not only the finest, but the only, city in West Africa. "Lagos! you ejaculate—you don't know Lagos." I know I have not been ashore there; nevertheless I have contemplated that spot from the point of view of Lagos bar for more than thirty solid hours, to say nothing of seeing photographs of its details galore, and I repeat the above statement. Yet for all that, Loanda had no laid-on water supply nor public street lamps until she was well on in her 400th year, which was just before I first met her. During the past she had had her water brought daily in boats from the Bengo River, and for street lighting she relied on the private enterprise of her citizens.[1] The reports given me on these endeavours to develope were as follows. As for the water in its laid-on state, it was held by the more aristocratic citizens to be unduly expensive (500 reis per cubic metre), and they grumbled. The general public, though holding the same opinion, did not confine their attention to grumbling. Stand-pipes had been put up in suitable places and an official told off to each stand-pipe to make a charge for water drawn. Water in West Africa is woman's palaver, and you may say what you please about the down-troddenness of African ladies elsewhere, but I maintain that the West African lady in the matter of getting what she wants is no discredit to the rest of the sex, black, white, or yellow. In this case the ladies wanted that water, but did not go so far as wanting

[1] Loanda has now a gas company, and the installation is well under way, under Belgian supervision.



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CLIFFS AT LOANDA

to pay for it. In the history given to me it was evident to an unprejudiced observer that they first tried kindness to the guardian officials of the stand-pipes, but these men were of the St. Anthony breed, and it was no good. Checked, but not foiled, in their admirable purpose of domestic economy, those dear ladies laid about in their minds for other methods, and finally arranged that one of a party visiting a stand-pipe every morning should devote her time to scratching the official while the rest filled their water pots and hers. This ingenious plan was in working order when I was in Loanda, but since leaving it I do not know what modification it may have undergone, only I am sure that ultimately those ladies will win, for the African lady—at any rate the West coast variety—is irresistible; as Livingstone truly remarked, "they are worse than the men." In the street lamp matter I grieve to say that the story as given to me does not leave my own country blameless. Portugal ordered for Loanda a set of street lamps from England. She sent out a set of old gas lamp standards. There being no gas in Loanda there was a pause until oil lamps to put on them came out. They ultimately arrived, but the P.W.D. failed to provide a ladder for the lamplighter. Hence that worthy had to swarm each individual lamp-post, a time-taking performance which normally landed him in the arms of Aurora before Loanda was lit for the night; but however this may be, I must own that Loanda's lights at night are a truly lovely sight, and its P.W.D.'s chimney a credit to the whole West Coast of Africa, to say nothing of its Observatory and the weather reports it so faithfully issues, so faithfully and so scientifically that it makes one deeply regret that Loanda has not got a climate that

deserves them, but only one she might write down as dry and have done with it.

The present position of the Angola trade is interesting, instructive, and typical. I only venture to speak on it in so far as I can appeal to the statements of Mr. Nightingale, who is an excellent authority, having been long resident in Angola, and heir to the traditions of English enterprise there, so ably represented by the firm of Newton, Carnegie and Co. The trade of Ka Kongo, the dependent province on Angola, I need not mention, because its trade is conditioned by that of its neighbours Congo Français and the Congo Belge.

The interesting point—painfully interesting—is the supplanting of English manufactures, and the way in which the English shipping interest[1] at present suffers from the differential duties favouring the Portuguese line, the Empreza Nacional de Navigacão a Vapor. This line, on which I have had the honour of travelling, and consuming in lieu of other foods enough oil and olives for the rest of my natural life, is an admirable line. It shows a calm acquiescence in the ordinances of Fate, a general courteous gentleness, combined with strong smells and the strain of stringed instruments, not to be found on other West Coast boats. It runs two steamers a month (6th and 23rd) from Lisbon, and they call at Madeira, St. Vincent, Santiago, Principe and San Thome Islands, Kabinda, San Antonio (Kongo), Ambriz, Loanda, Ambrizzette, Novo Redondo, Benguella, Mossamedes and Port Alexander, every

[1] Referring to cotton goods, the Foreign Office report on the trade of Angola for 1896 (1949) says the same cottons coming from Manchester would pay 250 reis per kilo in foreign bottoms, and 80 per cent of 250 reis if coming in Portuguese bottoms and nationalised in Lisbon.

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DONEO ANGOLA.

alternate steamer calling at Liverpool. The other steamboat lines that visit Loanda are the African and British-African of Liverpool, which run monthly, in connection with the other South-west African ports; and the Woermann line from Hamburg. The French Chargeurs-Reunis started a line of steamers from Havre *via* Lisbon to Loanda, Madagascar, Delagoa Bay, touching at Capetown, when so disposed, but this line has discontinued calling in on Loanda. The other navigation for Angola is done by the Rio Quanza Company, which runs two steamers up that river as far as Dondo; but this industry, Dondo included, Mr. Nightingale states to be in a parlous state since the extension of the Royal Trans-African Railway Company[1] to Cazengo, "as all the coffee which previously came *via* Dondo by means of carriers, now comes by rail, the town of Dondo is almost deserted; the house property which a few years ago was valued at £200,000 sterling, to-day would not realise £10,000." I may remark in this connection, however, not to raise the British railway-material makers' feelings unduly, that all this railway's rolling stock and material is Belgian in origin. This seems to be the fate of African railways. I am told it is on account, for one thing, of the way in which the boilers of the English locomotives are set in, namely, too stiffly, whereby they suffer more over rough roads than the more loosely hung together foreign-made locomotives; and, for another, that English-made rolling stock is too heavy for rough roads, and that roads under the conditions in Africa cannot be otherwise than rough, &c. It is not, however, Belgian stuff alone

[1] Angola also has a small railway from Catumbella to Benguella, a distance of 15 kiloms. and is contemplating constructing an important line from either Benguella or Mossamedes up to Caconda.

that is competing and ousting our own from the markets of Angola. American machinery, owing to the personal enterprise of several American engineering firms, is supplying steam-engines and centrifugal pumps for working salt at Cucuaco, and machinery for dealing with sugar-cane. Mr. Nightingale says the cultivation of the sugar-cane is rapidly extending, for the sole purpose of making rum. The ambition of every small trader, after he has put a few hundreds of milreis together, is to become a fazendeiro (planter) and make rum, for which there is ever a ready sale. But regarding the machinery, Mr. Nightingale says: "Up to the present time no British firm has sent out a representative to this province. There is a fair demand for cane-crushing mills, steam engines and turbines. A representative of an American firm is out here for the third time within four years, and has done good business; and there is no reason why the British manufacturers should not do as well. The American machinery is inferior to British makes, and cheaper; but it sells well, which is the principal thing."

It is the same story throughout the Angola trade. No English matches come into its market. The Companhia de Mossemedes, which is only nominally Portuguese, and is worked by German capital, has obtained from the Government an enormous tract of country stretching to the Zambesi, with rights to cure fish and explore mines. Cartridges made in Holland, and an iron pier made in Belgium, an extinct trade in soap and a failing one in Manchester goods,[1] and gunpowder, are all sad items in Mr.

[1] The imports in 1896 from England being 978,745 kilos, against 2,644,455 in 1891—a difference of 1,665,710 kilos against Manchester. —*Foreign Office Annual Series, Consular Report, No.* 1949.

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TRADING STORES.

Nightingale's lament. Small matters in themselves, you may think, but straws show which way the wind blows, and it blows against England's trade in every part of Africa not under England's flag. It would not, however, be fair to put down to differential tariffs alone our failing trade in Angola, because our successful competitors in hardware and gunpowder are other nations who have to face the same disadvantages—Germany, Holland, and Belgium. Portugal herself is now competing with the Manchester goods. She does so with well-made stuffs, but she is undoubtedly aided by her tariff. The consular report (1949) says: "The falling off in Manchester cotton since 1891 shows a diminution of 1,665,710 kilos. Cotton, if coming from Manchester via Lisbon, 1,665,710, duties 80 per cent, or 250 reis per kilo, equal 333,144 milreis (about £51,250); cotton coming from Portugal, 1,665,710 kilos, duties 25 reis per kilo, equal to 41,642 dollars, 750 reis (about £6,400, showing a difference in the receipts for one year of £44,850."

There is in this statement, I own, a certain obscurity, which has probably got into it from the editing of the home officials. I do not know if the 1,665,710 kilos, representing the difference between what England shipped to Angola in 1891 and what she shipped in 1896, was supplied in the latter years from Portugal of Portuguese manufacture; but assuming such to have been the case, the position from a tariff point of view would work out as follows: 1,665,710 kilos of cottons from Manchester would pay duty, at 250 reis per kilo, 416,427½ milreis. Taking the exchange at 3*s.* sterling per milreis, this amounts to £62,464. If this quantity of Manchester-made cottons had gone to Lisbon, and there become nationalised, and sent forward to Angola in Portuguese steamers, the duty would

have been 80 per cent. of 250 reis per kilo, or say 333,142 milreis, equal to £49,971; but if this quantity were manufactured in Portugal, and shipped by Portuguese steamers, the duty would be 25 reis per kilo, equal to £6,246. The premium in favour of Portuguese production on this quantity is therefore £56,218, a terrific tax on the Portuguese subjects of Angola, for one year, in one class of manufactures only.

The deductions, however, that Mr. Nightingale draws from his figures in regard to Portugal and her province are quite clear. He says, "There is no doubt that the province of Angola is a very rich one. No advantages are held out for merchants to establish here, and thus bring capital into the place, which means more business, the opening up of roads, and the development of industries and agriculture. Generally the colony exists for the benefit of a few manufacturers in Portugal, who reap all the profit." Again, he says, "The merchants are much too highly taxed, a good fourth part of their capital is paid out in duties, with no certainty when it will be realised again. Angola, with plenty of capital, moderate taxes and low duties, might in a few years become a most flourishing colony."

Now here we come to the general problem of the fiscal arrangements suitable for an African colony; and as this is a subject of great importance to England in the administration of her colonies, and errors committed in it are serious errors, as demonstrated by the late war in Sierra Leone,—the most serious even we have had for many years to deal with in West Africa,—I must beg to be allowed to become diffuse, humbly stating that I do not wish to dogmatise on the matter, but merely to

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ST. PAUL DO LOANDA.

attract the attention of busy practical men to the question of the proper system to employ in the administration of tropical possessions. This seems to me a most important affair to England, now that she has taken up great territories and the responsibilities appertaining to them in that great tropical continent, Africa. There are other parts of the world where the suitability of the system of government to the conditions of the governed country is not so important.

It seems to me that the deeper down from the surface we can go the greater is our chance of understanding any matter; and I humbly ask you to make a dive and consider what reason European nations have for interfering with Africa at all. There are two distinct classes of reasons that justify one race of human beings interfering with another race. These classes are pretty nearly inextricably mixed; but if, like Mark Twain's horse and myself, you will lean against a wall and think, I fancy you will see that primarily two classes of reasons exist—(*a*), the religious reason, the rescue of souls—a reason that is a duty to the religious man as keen as the rescue of a drowning man is to a brave one; (*b*), pressure reasons. These pressure reasons are divisible into two sub-classes—(1) external; (2) internal. Now of external pressure reasons primarily we have none in Africa. The African hive has so far only swarmed on its own continent; it has not sent off swarms to settle down in the middle of Civilisation, and terrify, inconvenience, and sting it in a way that would justify Civilisation not only in destroying the invading swarm, but in hunting up the original hive and smoking it out to prevent a recurrence of the nuisance, as the Roman Empire was bound to try and do with its Barbarians.

Such being the case,[1] we can leave this first pressure reason —the war justification—for interfering with the African—on one side, and turn to the other reason,—the internal pressure reasons acting from within on the European nations. These are roughly divisible into three sub-classes:—(1) the necessity of supplying restless and ambitious spirits with a field for enterprise during such times as they are not wanted for the defence of their nation in Europe—France's reason for acquiring Africa; (2) population pressure; (3) commercial pressure. The two latter have been the chief reason for the Teutonic nations, England and Germany, overrunning the lands of other men. This Teutonic race is a strong one, with the habit, when in the least encouraged by Peace and Prosperity, of producing more men to the acre than the acre can keep. Being among themselves a kindly, common-sense race, it seems to them more reasonable to go and get more acres elsewhere than to kill themselves off down to a level which their own acres could support. The essential point about the "elsewhere" is that it should have a climate suited to the family. These migrations to other countries made under the pressure of population usually take place along the line of least resistance, namely, into countries where the resident population is least able to resist the invasion, as in America and Australia; but occasionally, as in the case of Canada and the Cape, they follow the conquest of an European rival who was the pioneer in rescuing the country from savagery.

[1] In saying this I am aware of the conduct of Carthage and of the Barbary Moors. But neither of these were primarily African. The one was instigated by Greece, the other by the Vandals and the Arabs.

I am aware that this hardly bears out my statement that the Teutonic races are kindly, but as I have said "among themselves," we will leave it; and to other people, the original inhabitants of the countries they overflow, they are on the whole as kindly as you can expect family men to be. A distinguished Frenchman has stated that the father of a family is capable of anything; and it certainly looks as if he thought no more of stamping out the native than of stamping out any other kind of vermin that the country possessed to the detriment of his wife and children. I do not feel called upon to judge him and condemn, for no doubt the father of a family has his feelings; and as it must have been irritating to an ancestor of modern America to come home from an afternoon's fishing and find merely the remains of his homestead and bits of his family, it was more natural for him to go for the murderers than strive to start an Aborigines' Protection Society. Though why, caring for wife and child so much as he does, the Teuton should have gone and planted them, for example, in places reeking with Red Indians is a mystery to me. I am inclined to accept my French friend's explanation on this point, namely, that it arose from the Teuton being a little thick in the head and incapable of considering other factors beyond climate. But this may be merely thickness in my own head—a hopelessly Teutonic one.

However, the occupation of territory from population pressure in Europe we need not consider here; for it is not this reason that has led Europe to take an active interest in tropical Africa. It is a reason that comes into African affairs only—if really at all—in the extreme north and extreme south of the continent—Algeria and the

Cape. The vast regions of Africa from 30° N. to 20° S., have long been known not to possess a climate suitable for colonising in. "Men's blood rapidly putrifies under the tropic zone." "Tropical conditions favour the growth of pathogenic bacteria"—a rose called by another name. Anyhow, not the sort of country attractive to the father of a family to found a home in. Yet, as in spite of this, European nations are possessing themselves of this country with as much ardour as if it were a health resort and a gold mine in one, it is plain they must have another reason, and this reason is in the case of Germany and England primarily commercial pressure.

These two Teutonic nations have the same habit in their commercial production that they have in their human production,—the habit of overdoing it for their own country; and just as Lancashire, for example, turns out more human beings than can comfortably exist there, so does she turn out more manufactured articles than can be consumed there; and just as the surplus population created by a strong race must find other lands to live in, so must the surplus manufactures of a strong race find other markets; both forms of surplus are to a strong race wealth.

The main difference between these things is that the surplus manufactured article is in no need of considering climate in the matter of its expansion. It stands in a relation to the man who goes out into the world with it akin to that of the wife and family to the colonist; the trader will no more meekly stand having his trade damaged than the colonist will stand having his family damaged; but at the same time, the mere fact that the climate destroys trade-stuff is, well, all the better for trade, and trade, moreover, leads the trader to view the native population from

a different standpoint to that of the colonist. To that family man the native is a nuisance, sometimes a dangerous one, at the best an indifferent servant, who does not do his work half so well as in a decent climate he can do it himself. To the trader the native is quite a different thing, a customer. A dense native population is what the trader wants; and on their wealth, prosperity, peace and industry, the success of his endeavours depends.

Now it seems to me that there are in this world two classes of regions attractive to the great European manufacturing nations, England and Germany, wherein they can foster and expand their surplus production of manufactured articles. (1) Such regions as India and China. (2) Such regions as Africa. The necessity of making this division comes from the difference between the native populations. In the first case you are dealing with a people who are manufacturers themselves, and you are selling your goods mainly against gold. In the second the people are not manufacturers themselves except in a very small degree, and you are selling your goods against raw material. In a bustling age like this there seems to be a tendency here and in Germany to value the first form of market above the second. I fail to see that this is a sound valuation. The education our commerce gives will in a comparatively short time transform the people of the first class of markets into rival producers of manufactured articles wherewith to supply the world's markets. We by our pacification of India have already made India a greater exporter than she was before our rule there. If China is opened up, things will be even worse for England and Germany; for the Chinese, with their great power of production, will produce

manufactured articles which will fairly swamp the world's markets; for, sad to say, there is little doubt but they can take out of our hands all textile trade, and probably several other lines of trade that England, Germany, and America now hold. India and China being populated, the one by a set of people at sixes and sevens with each other, and the other by a set of people who, to put it mildly, are not born warriors, cannot, except under the dominion and protection of a powerful European nation, commercially prosper. But England and Germany are not everybody. There is France. I could quite imagine France, for example, in possession of China, managing it on similar lines to those on which she is now managing West Africa, but with enormously different results to herself and the rest of the world. Her system of differential tariffs, be it granted, keeps her African possessions poor, and involves her in heavy imperial expenditure; but the Chinaman's industry would support the French system, and thrive under her jealous championship. This being the case, it is of value to England and Germany to hold as close a grip as possible over such regions as India and China, even though by so doing they are nourishing vipers in their commercial bosoms.

The case of the second class of markets—the tropical African—is different. Such markets are of enormous value to us; they are, especially the West African ones, regions of great natural riches in rubber, oil, timber, ivory, and minerals from gold to coal. They are in most places densely populated with customers for England's manufactured goods. The advantages of such a region to a manufacturing nation like ourselves are enormous; for not only do we get rid there of our manufactured goods, but we

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get, what is of equal value to our manufacturing classes, raw material at a cheap enough rate to enable the English manufacturers to turn out into the markets of the civilised world articles sufficiently cheap themselves to compete with those of other manufacturing nations.

The importance to us of such markets as Africa affords us seems to me to give us one sufficient reason for taking over these tropical African regions. I do not use the word justification in the matter, it is a word one has no right to use until we have demonstrated that our interference with the native population and our endeavours for our own population have ended in unmixed good; but it is a sound reason, as good a reason as we had in overrunning Australia and America. Indeed, I venture to think it is a better one, for the possession of a great market enables thousands of men, women and children to live in comfort and safety in England, instead of going away from home and all that home means; and this commercial reason,—for all its not having a high falutin sound in it,—is the one and only expansion reason we have that in itself desires the national peace and prosperity of the native races with whom it deals.

It seems to me no disgrace to England that her traders are the expanding force for her in Africa. There are three classes of men who are powers to a State—the soldier, the trader, and the scientist. Their efforts, when co-ordinated and directed by the true statesman—the religious man in the guise of philosopher and poet—make a great State. Being English, of course modesty prevents my saying that England is a great State. I content myself by saying that she is a truly great people, and will become a great State when she is led by a line of great statesmen—

statesmen who are not only capable, as indeed most of our statesmen have been, of seeing the importance of India and the colonies, but also capable of seeing the equal importance to us of markets.

England's democracy must learn the true value of the markets that our fellow-countrymen have so long been striving to give her, and must appreciate the heroism those men have displayed, only too often unrequited, never half appreciated by the sea-wife, who "breeds a breed of rovin' men and casts them over sea." Those who go to make new homes for the old country in Australia and America do not feel her want of interest keenly; but those heroes of commerce who go to fight and die in fever-stricken lands for the sake of the old homes at home, do feel her want of interest.

I am not speaking hastily, nor have I only West Africa in my mind in this matter; there are other regions where we could have succeeded better, with advantage to all concerned—Malaya, British Guiana, New Guinea, the West Indies, as well as West Africa. If you examine the matter I think you will see that all these regions we have failed in are possessed of unhealthy climates, while the regions we have succeeded with are those possessed of healthy climates. The reason for this difference in our success seems to me to lie mainly in our deficiency of statesmanship at home. We really want the humid tropic zone more than other nations do; a climate that eats up steel and hardware as a rabbit eats lettuces is an excellent customer to a hardware manufacturing town, &c. A region densely populated by native populations willing to give raw trade stuffs in exchange for cotton goods, which they bury or bang out on stones in the course of washing

or otherwise actively help their local climate to consume, is invaluable to a textile manufacturing town. Yet it would be idle to pretend that our Government has realised these things. Our superior ability as manufacturers, and the great enterprise of our men who have gone out to conquer the markets of the tropics, have given us all the advantages we now enjoy from those markets, but they could do no more; and now, when we are confronted by the expansion of other European nations, those men and their work are being lost to England. Our fellow-countrymen will go anywhere and win anywhere to-day just as well as yesterday, where the climate of the region allows England to throw enough of them in at a time to hold it independent of the home government; but in places where we cannot do this, in the unhealthy tropical regions where those men want backing up against the aggression on their interests of foreign governments, well, up to the present they have not had that backing up, and hence we have lost to England in England the advantages we so easily might have secured.

An American magazine the other day announced in a shocked way that I could evidently "swear like a trooper!" I cannot think where it got the idea from; but really!—well, of course I don't naturally wish to, but I cannot help feeling that if I could it would be a comfort to me; for when I am up in the great manufacturing towns, England properly so called, their looms and forges seem to me to sing the same song to the great maker of Fate—we must prosper or England dies. And there is but one thing they can prosper on—for there is but one feeding ground for them and all the thousands of English men, women and children dependent on them—

the open market of the World. To me the life blood of England is her trade. Her soul, her brain is made of other things, but they should not neglect or spurn the thing that feeds them—Commerce—any more than they should undervalue the thing that guards them—the warrior.

But, you will say, we will not be tied down to this commercial reason as England's reason for taking over the administration of tropical Africa. My friend, I really think on the whole you had better—it's reasonable. I grant that it has not been the reason why English missionaries and travellers have risked their lives for the good of Africa, or of human knowledge, but as a ground from which to develop a policy of administering the country this commercial one is good, because it requires as aforesaid the prosperity of the African population; and your laudable vanities in the matter I cannot respect, when I observe right in the middle of the map of Africa an enormous region called the Congo Free State. I have reason to believe that that region was opened up by Englishmen—Livingstone, Stanley, Speke, Grant and Burton. If you had been so truly keen on suppressing Arab slavery and native cannibalism, there was a paradise for you! Yet, you hand it over to some one else. Was it because you thought some one else could do it better? or—but we will leave that affair and turn to the consideration of the possibility of administering tropical Africa, governmentally, to the benefit of all concerned.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CROWN COLONY SYSTEM

Wherein it is set down briefly why it is necessary to enter upon this discussion at all.

NOW, you will say, Wherefore should the general public in England interest itself in this matter? Surely things are now governmentally administered in England's West African Colonies for the benefit of all parties concerned.

Well, that is just exactly and precisely what they are not. The system of Crown Colonies, when it is worked by Portuguese, does, at any rate, benefit some of the officials; but English officials are incapable of availing themselves of the opportunities this system offers them; and therefore, as this form of opportunity is the only benefit the thing can give any one, the sooner the Crown Colony system is removed from the sphere of practical politics and put under a glass case in the South Kensington Museum, labelled "Extinct," the better for every one.

I beg you, before we go further in this matter, to look round the world calmly, and then, when you have allowed the natural burst of enthusiasm concerning the extent and the magnificence of the British Empire to pass, you will observe that in the more unhealthy regions England has failed. I say she has failed because of the Crown Colony

system—failed with them even during days wherein she has had to face nothing like what she has to face to-day from the commercial competition of other nations.

In order to justify myself for holding the view that it is possible for any system of English administration to fail anywhere, I would draw your attention to the fact that the system used by us for governing unhealthy regions is the Crown Colony system. The two things go together, and we must assign one of them as the reason of our failure. You may, if it please you, put it down to the other thing, the unhealthiness. I cannot, for I know that no race of men can battle more gallantly with climate than the English—no other race of men has shown so great a capacity as we have to make the tropics pay. Still to-day we stand face to face with financial disaster in tropical regions.

If you will look through a list of England's tropical unhealthy possessions, leaving out West Africa, you will see nothing but depression. There are the West Indies, British Guiana, and British Honduras. All of these are naturally rich regions and accessible to the markets of the world. There is not one of them hemmed in by great mountain chains or surrounded by arid deserts, across which their products must be transported at enormous cost. They are all on our highway—the sea; nor are they sparsely populated. Their population, according to the latest Government returns, is 1,653,832, and this estimate is acknowledged to be necessarily imperfect and insufficient. But with all these advantages we find no prosperity there under our rule. Nothing but poverty and discontent and now pauperisation in the shape of grants from the Imperial Exchequer. You say, "Oh! but that is on account of the sugar bounties and the majority of the population not being

English;" but that argument won't do. Look at the Canary Islands. They were just as hard hit by aniline dyes supplanting cochineal. Their population is not mainly English; but down on those islands came an Englishman, the Spanish Government had the sense to let him have his way, and that Englishman, Mr. A. L. Jones, of Liverpool, has, in a space of only fifteen years, made those islands a source of wealth to Spain, instead of paupers on an Imperial bounty. "But," you say, "we have other regions under the Crown Colony system that are not West Indian." Granted, but look at them. There are the West African group; a group of three in the Mediterranean, Gibraltar, Malta, and Cyprus, two fortifications and a failure; away out East another group, which are prosperous from the fact that they are surrounded by countries whose fiscal arrangements are providentially worse than their own, and this seems to be the only condition which can keep a Crown Colony on its financial legs at all. For all our Crown Colonies adjacent to countries who can compete with them in trade matters are paupers, or their efficiency and value to the Empire is in the sphere of military and naval affairs, as posts and coaling stations. These possessions of the Gibraltar, Malta, and Hong-Kong brand should be regarded as being part of our navy and army, and not confused with colonies, though essential to them.

"Still," you say, "you are forgetting Ceylon, the Fiji Islands, the Falklands, and the Mauritius." I am not. Ceylon is part of India and practically an Indian province, so is out of my arguments. I present you with the others wherefrom to build up a defence of the Crown Colony system. Say, "See the Falklands off Cape Horn, with a

population of 1,789, and heaps of sheep and a satisfactory budget." I can say nothing against them, and may possibly be forced to admit that for such a region, off Cape Horn, and with a population mainly of sheep, the Crown Colony system may be a Heaven-sent form of administration. But I think England would be wiser if she looked carefully at the West Indian group and recognised how like their conditions are to those of the West African group, for in their disastrous state of financial affairs you have an object lesson teaching what will be the fate of Crown Colonies in West Africa—Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast and Lagos—if she will be not warned in time to alter the system at present employed for governing these possessions. It is an object lesson in miniature of what will otherwise be an infinitely greater drain on the resources of England, for West Africa is immensely larger, immensely more densely populated, and immensely more deadly in climate than the West Indies. For one Englishman killed by the West Indies West Africa will want ten; for every £1,000, £20,000—and all for what? Only for the sake of a system—a system intrinsically alien to all English ideals of government—a system that doddered along until Mr. Chamberlain expected it to work and then burst out all over in rows, and was found to be costing some 25 per cent. of the entire bulk of white trade with West Africa; a system that, let the land itself be ever so rich, can lead to nothing but heart-breaking failure.

Now I own the Crown Colony system looks well on paper. It consists of a Governor, appointed by the Colonial Office, supported by an Executive and Legislative Council (both nominated), and on the Gold Coast with two unofficial members in the legislative body. These Councils, as far as the

influence they have, are dead letters, and legislation is in the hands of the Governor. This is no evil in itself. You will get nothing done in tropical Africa except under the influence of individual men ; but your West African Governor, though not controlled by the Councils within the colony, is controlled by a power outside the colony, namely the Colonial Office in London. Up to our own day the Colonial Office has been, except in the details of domestic colonial affairs, a drag-chain on English development in Western Africa. It has not even been indifferent, but distinctly, deliberately adverse. In the year 1865 a Select Committee of the House of Commons inquired into and reported upon the state of British establishments on the western coast of Africa. "It was a strong Committee, and the report was brief and decided. Recognising that it is not possible to withdraw the British Government wholly or immediately from any settlements or engagements on the West African Coast, the Committee laid down that all further extension of territory or assumption of government, or new treaties offering any protection to native tribes, would be inexpedient, and that the object of our policy should be to encourage in the natives the exercise of those qualities which may render it possible for us more and more to transfer to them the administration of all the governments with a view to the ultimate withdrawal from all, except, perhaps, Sierra Leone."[1]

Remember also this. This one in 1865 was not the first of those sort of fits the Colonial Office had in West African affairs. It was just as bad after the Battle of Katamansu in 1827, and had it not been for the English traders our honour

[1] See Lucas's *Historical Geography of the British Colonies*, Oxford, 1894.

to the natives we had made treaties with would have been destroyed, and the Gold Coast lost whole and entire.

This policy of 1865 has remained the policy of the English Government towards West Africa up to 1894. In spite of it, the English have held on. Governor after Governor, who, as soon as he became acquainted with the nature of the region, has striven to rouse official apathy, has been held in, and his spirit of enterprise broken by official snubs, and has been taught that keeping quiet was what he was required to do. It broke many a man's heart to do it; but doing it worked no active evil on the colony under his control, the affairs of which financially prospered in the hands of the trading community so well, that not only had no West African colony any public debt, except Sierra Leone, which was a philanthropic station, but the Gold Coast, for example, had sufficient surplus to lend money to colonies in other parts of the world. But at last the time came when the aggression on Africa by the Continental powers fulfilled all the gloomy prophecies which the merchants of Liverpool had long been uttering; and one possession of ours in West Africa after another felt the effects of the activity of other nations and the apathy of our own. They would have felt it in vain, and have utterly succumbed to it, had it not been for two Englishmen. Sir George Taubman Goldie, who, when in West Africa on a voyage of exploration, recognised the possibilities of the Niger regions, and secured them for England in the face of great difficulties; and Mr. Chamberlain. Concerning Sir George Goldie's efforts in securing a most important section of West Africa for England, I shall have occasion to speak later. Concerning Mr. Chamberlain, I may as well speak now; but be it understood, both these men,

whatever their own ideas on their work may be, were men who came up at a critical point to reinforce Liverpool and Bristol and London merchants, who had fought for centuries—not to put too fine a point on it—from the days of Edward IV. for the richest feeding grounds in all the world for England's manufacturing millions. The dissensions, distrust and misunderstandings which have raged among these three representatives of England's majesty and power, are no affair of mine, as a mere general student of the whole affair, beyond the due allowance one must make for the grave mischief worked by the human factors. Well, as aforesaid, Mr. Chamberlain alone of all our statesmen saw the great possibilities and importance of Western Africa, and thinking to realise them, forthwith inaugurated a policy which if it had had sound ground to go on, would have succeeded. It had not, it had the Crown Colony system—and our hope for West Africa is that so powerful a man as he has shown himself to be in other political fields, may show himself to be yet more powerful, and formulate a totally new system suited for the conditions of West Africa, and not content himself with the old fallacy of ascribing failure to the individuals, white or black, government official or merchant or missionary, who act under the system which alone is to blame for England's present position in West Africa; but I own that if Mr. Chamberlain does this he will be greater than one man can ever be reasonably be expected to be, and again it is, I fear, not possible to undo what has been done by the resolution of 1865.

Possibly the greatest evil worked by this resolution has been the separation of sympathy between the Merchants and the Government. Since 1865 these two English factors have

been working really against each other. Possibly the greatest touch of irony in modern politics is to be found in a despatch dated March 30th, 1892, addressed to the British Ambassador at Paris, wherein it is said, "The colonial policy of Great Britain and France in West Africa has been widely different. France from her basis on the Senegal coast has pursued steadily the aim of establishing herself on the Upper Niger and its affluents; this object she has attained by a large and constant expenditure, and by a succession of military expeditions. Great Britain, on the other hand, has adopted the policy of advance by commercial enterprise; she has not attempted to compete with the military operations of her neighbour."[1] I should rather think she hadn't! Let alone the fact that France did not expand mainly by military operations, but through magnificent explorers backed up by sound sense. While, as for Great Britain "adopting the policy of advance by commercial enterprise"—well, I don't know what the writer of that despatch's ideas on "adoption" are, but suppression would be the truer word. Had Great Britain given even her countenance to "commercial enterprise," she would have given it by now representation in her councils for West Africa, a thing it has not yet got. True, there is the machinery for this representation ready in the Chambers of Commerce, but these Chambers have no real power whatsoever as far as West African affairs are concerned; they are graciously permitted to send deputations to the Colonial Office and write letters when they feel so disposed, but practically that is all.

Truly it is a ridiculous situation, because West Africa matters to no party in England so much as it matters to the mercantile. I am aware I shall be told that it is

[1] Parliamentary Paper, C 6701, 92.

impossible that one section of Englishmen can have a greater interest in any part of the Empire than another section, and, for example, that West Africa matters quite as much to the religious party as it does to the mercantile. But, to my mind, neither Religion nor Science is truly concerned in the political aspect of West Africa. It should not matter, for example, to the missionary whether he works under one European Government or another, or a purely native Government, so long as he is allowed by that Government to carry on his work of evangelisation unhindered; nor, similarly, does it matter to the scientific man, so long as he is allowed to carry on his work; but to the merchant it matters profoundly whether West Africa is under English or foreign rule, and whether our rule there is well ordered. For one thing, on the merchants of West Africa falls entirely the duty of supplying the revenue which supports the government of our colonies there; and for another, it seems to me that whether the Government he is under is English or no does matter very much to the English merchant. His duty as an Englishman is the support of the population of his own country, directly the support of its manufacturing classes. Everything that tends to alienate his influence from the service of his fellow-countrymen is a degradation to him. He may be individually as successful in trading with foreign-made goods, but as a member of the English State he is at a lower level when he does so; he becomes a mere mercenary in the service of a foreign power engaged in adding to the prosperity of an alien nation. Again, in this matter the difference between the religious man and the commercial shows up clearly. Let

the religion of the missionary be what it may, his aim is according to it to secure the salvation of the human race. What does it matter to him whether the section of the human race he strives to save be black, white, or yellow? Nothing; as the noble records of missions will show you. Therefore I repeat that West Africa matters to no party in the English State so much as it matters to the mercantile. With no other party are true English interests so closely bound up.

West Africa probably will never be a pleasant place wherein to spend the winter months, a holiday ground that will serve to recuperate the jaded energies of our poets and painters, like the Alps or Italy; probably, likewise, it will never be a place where we can ship our overflow population; and for the same reason—its unhealthiness—it will be of no use to us as a military academy, for troops are none the better for soaking in malaria and operating against ill-armed antagonists. But West Africa is of immense use to us as a feeding-ground for our manufacturing classes. It could be of equal value to England as a healthy colony, but in a reverse way, for it could supply the wealth which would enable them to remain in England in place of leaving it, if it were properly managed with this definite end in view. It is idle to imagine that it can be properly managed unless commercial experts are represented in the Government which controls its administration, as is not the case at present. It is no case of abusing the men who at present strive to do their best with it. They do not set themselves up as knowing much about trade, and they constantly demonstrate that they do not. Armed with absolutely no definite policy, subsisting on official and non-

expert trade opinion, they drift along, with some nebulous sort of notion in their heads about "elevating the African in the plane of civilisation."

Now, of course, there exists a passable reason for things being as they are in our administration of West Africa. England is never malign in intention, and never rushes headlong into a line of policy. Therefore, in order to comprehend how it has come about that she should have a system so unsuited to the regions to which it is applied, as the Crown Colony system is unsuited to West Africa, we must calmly investigate the reason that underlies this affair. This reason, which is the cause of all the trouble, is a misconception of the nature of West Africa, and it must be considered under two heads.

The thing behind the resolution of 1865 is the undoubted fact that West Africa is no good for a Colony from its unhealthiness. There is no one who knows the Coast but will grant this; but surely there is no one who knows, not only the West Coast of Africa but also the necessities of our working classes in England, who can fail to recognise that this is only half an argument against England holding West Africa; because we want something besides regions whereto we can send away from England men and women, namely, we want regions that will enable us to keep the very backbone of England, our manufacturing classes, in a state of healthy comfort and prosperity at home in England, in other words, we want markets.

Alas! in England the necessity for things grows up in a dumb way, though providentially it is irresistibly powerful; once aroused it forces our statesmen to find the required thing, which they with but bad grace and grievous groans proceed leisurely to do.

This is pretty much the same as saying that the English are deficient in statesmanship, and this is what I mean, and I am convinced that no other nation but our own could have prospered with so much of this imperfection; but remember it is an imperfection, and is not a thing to be proud of any more than a stammer. External conditions have enabled England so far barely to feel her drawback, but now external conditions are in a different phase, and she must choose between acquiring statesmanship competent to cope with this phase, or drift on in her present way until the force of her necessities projects her into an European war. A perfectly unnecessary conclusion to the pressure of commercial competition she is beginning to feel, but none the less inevitable with her present lack of statecraft.

The second part of the reason of England's trouble in West Africa is that other fallacious half reason which our statesmen have for years been using to soothe the minds of those who urged on her in good time the necessity for acquiring the hinterlands of West Africa, namely, "After all, England holds the key of them in holding the outlets of the rivers." And while our statesmen have been saying this, France has been industriously changing the lock on the door by diverting trade routes from the hinterland she has so gallantly acquired, down into those seaboard districts which she possesses.

"Well, well, well," you will say, "we have woke up at last, we can be trusted now." I own I do not see why you should expect to be suddenly trusted by the men with whose interests you have played so long. I remember hearing about a missionary gentleman who was told a long story by the father of a bad son, who for years went gallivanting about West Africa, bringing the family into

disrepute, and running up debts in all directions, and finally returned to the paternal roof. "Dear me! how interesting," said the missionary; "quite the Parable of the Prodigal Son! I trust, My Friend, you remembered it, and killed the fatted calf on his return?" "No, Sar," said the parent; "but I dam near kill that ar prodigal son."

CHAPTER XIV

THE CROWN COLONY SYSTEM IN WEST AFRICA

Wherein is set down briefly in what manner of ways the Crown Colony system works evil in Western Africa.

I HAVE attempted to state that the Crown Colony system is unsuited for governing Western Africa, and have attributed its malign influence to its being a system which primarily expresses the opinions of well-intentioned but ill-informed officials at home, instead of being, according to the usual English type of institution, representative of the interests of the people who are governed, and of those who have the largest stake in the countries controlled by it—the merchants and manufacturing classes of England. It remains to point out how it acts adversely to the prosperity of all concerned; for be it clearly understood there is no corruption in it whatsoever: there is waste of men's lives, moneys, and careers, but nothing more at present. By-and-by it will add to its other charms and functions that of being, in the early future, a sort of patent and successful incubator for hatching a fine lively brood of little Englanders, who will cry out, "What is the good of West Africa?" and so forth; and they will seem sweetly reasonable, because by then West Africa will be down on the English rates, a pauper.

It may seem inconceivable, however, that the present governing body of West Africa, the home officials, and the English public as represented in Parliament, can be ill-informed. West Africa has not been just shot up out of the ocean by a submarine volcanic explosion; nor are we landing on it out of Noah's ark, for the thing has been in touch with Europe since the fifteenth century; yet, inconceivable as it may seem that there is not by now formulated and in working order a method of governing it suitable for its nature, the fact that this is so remains, and providentially for us it is quite easy of explanation without abusing any one; though no humane person, like myself for example, can avoid sincerely hoping that Mr. Kipling is wrong when he sings

"Deep in all dishonour have we stained our garments' hem.
Yet be ye not dismayed, we have stumbled and have strayed.
Our leaders went from righteousness, the Lord will deal with them.

For although it is true that we have made a mess of this great feeding ground for England's manufacturing millions; yet there are no leaders on whom blame alone can fall, whom we can make scapegoats out of, who can be driven away into the wilderness carrying the sins of the people. The blame lies among all those classes of people who have had personally to deal with West Africa and the present system; and the Crown Colony system and the resolution of '65 are merely the necessary fungi of rotten stuff, for they have arisen from the information that has been, and has not been, placed at the disposal of our Government in England by the Government officials of West Africa, the Missionaries, and the Traders.

We will take the traders' blame first—their contribution to the evil dates from about 1827 and consists in omission

—frankly, I think that they, in their generation, were justified in not telling all they could tell about the Coast. They found they could get on with it, keep it quiet and manage the natives fairly well under the system of Courts of Equity in the Rivers, and the Committee of merchants with a Governor approved of by the Home Government, which was working on the Gold Coast up to 1843. In 1841 there arose the affair of Governor Maclean, and the inauguration of the line of policy which resulted in the resolution of 1865. The governmental officials having cut themselves off from the traders and taken over West Africa, failed to manage West Africa, and so resolved that West Africa was not worth managing,—a thing they are bound to do again.

The abuse showered on the merchants, and the terrific snubs with which the Government peppered them, did not make the traders blossom and expand, and shower information on those who criticised them—there are some natures that are not sweetened by Adversity. Moreover, the Government, when affairs had been taken over by the Offices in London, took the abhorrent form of Customs, and displayed a lively love of the missionary-made African, as he was then,—you can read about him in Burton [1]—and for the rest got up rows with the traders' best customers, the untutored African; rows, as the traders held, unnecessary in their beginning and feeble-handed in their termination. The whole of this sort of thing made the trader section keep all the valuable information to itself, and spend its energies in eluding the Customs, and talking what Burton terms "Commercial English."

Then we come to the contribution made by the Government officials to the formation of an erroneous

[1] *Wanderings in West Africa*, vol. i., 1863.

opinion concerning the state of affairs in West Africa. This arose from the conditions that surrounded them there, and the way in which they were unable, even if they desired, to expand their influence, distrusted naturally enough by the trading community since 1865, held in continuously by their home instructions, and unprovided with a sufficient supply of men or money on shore to go in for empire making, and also villainously badly quartered,—as you can see by reading Ellis's *West African Sketches*. It is small wonder and small blame to them that their account of West Africa has been a gloomy one, and such it must remain until these men are under a different system: for all the reasons that during the past have caused them to paint the Coast as a place of no value to England, remain still in full force,—as you can see by studying the disadvantages that service in a West African Crown Colony presents to-day to a civilian official.

Firstly, the climate is unhealthy, so that the usual make of Englishman does not like to take his wife out to the Coast with him. This means keeping two homes, which is expensive, and it gives a man no chance of saving money on an income say of £600 a year, for the official's life in West Africa is necessarily, let him be as economical as he may, an expensive one; and, moreover, things are not made more cheerful for him by his knowing that if he dies there will be no pension for his wife.

Secondly, there being no regular West African Service, there is no security for promotion; owing to the unhealthiness of the climate it is very properly ordained that each officer shall serve a year on the Coast, and then go home on a six months' furlough. It is a fairly common thing for a man to die before his twelve months' term is up, and

a still more common one for him to have to go on sick leave. Of course, the moment he is off, some junior official has to take his place and do his work. But in the event of the man whose work he does dying, gaining a position in another region, or promotion, the man who has been doing the work has no reason to hope he will step into the full emoluments and honours of the appointment, although experience will thus have given him an insight into the work. On the contrary, it too often happens that some new man, either fresh from London or who has already held a Government appointment in some totally different region to the West African, is placed in the appointment. If this new man is fresh to such work as he has to do, the displaced man has to teach him; if he is from a different region, he usually won't be taught, and he does not help to develop a spirit of general brotherly love and affection in the local governmental circles by the frank statement that he considers West African officials "jugginses" or "muffs," although he fairly offers to "alter this and show them how things ought to be done."

Then again the civilian official frequently complains that he has no such recognition given him for his services as is given to the military men in West Africa. I have so often heard the complaint, "Oh, if a man comes here and burns half a dozen villages he gets honours; while I, who keep the villages from wanting burning, get nothing;" and mind you, this is true. Like the rest of my sex I suffer from a chronic form of scarlet fever, and, from a knowledge of the country there, I hold it rubbish to talk of the brutality of mowing down savages with a Maxim gun when it comes to talking of West African bush fighting; for your West African is not an unarmed savage, he does

not assemble in the manner of Dr. Watts's ants, but wisely ensconces himself in the pleached arbours of his native land, and lets fly at you with a horrid scatter gun. This is bound to hit, and when it hits makes wounds worse than those made by a Maxim; in fact he quite turns bush fighting into a legitimate sport, let alone the service done him by his great ally, the climate. Still, it is hard on the civilian, and bad for English interests in West Africa, that the man who by his judgment, sympathy, and care, keeps a district at peace, should have less recognition than one who, acting under orders, doing his duty gallantly, and all that, goes and breaks up all native prosperity and white trade.

All these things acting together produce on the local Government official a fervid desire to get home to England, and obtain an appointment in some other region than the West Coast. I feel sure I am well within the mark when I say that two-thirds of the present Government officials in the West African English Crown Colonies have their names down on the transfer list, or are trying to get them there; and this sort of thing simply cannot give them an enthusiasm for their work sufficient to ensure its success, and of course leads to their painting a dismal picture of West Africa itself.

I am perfectly well aware that the conditions of life of officials in West Africa are better than those described by Ellis. Nevertheless, they are not yet what they should be: a corrugated iron house may cost a heap of money and yet not be a Paradise. I am also aware that the houses and general supplies given to our officials are immensely more luxurious than those given to German or French officials; but this does not compensate for the

horrors of boredom suffused with irritation to which the English official is subjected. More than half the quarrelling and discontent for which English officials are celebrated, and which are attributed to drink and the climate, simply arise from the domestic arrangements enforced on them in Coast towns, whereby they see far too much of each other. If you take any set of men and make them live together, day out and day in, without sufficient exercise, without interest in outside affairs, without dividing them up into regular grades of rank, as men are on board ship or in barracks, you are simply bound to have them dividing up into cliques that quarrel; the things they quarrel over may seem to an outsider miserably petty, but these quarrels are the characteristic eruption of the fever discontent. And may I ask you if the opinion of men in such a state is an opinion on which a sound policy wherewith to deal with so complex a region can be formed? I think not, yet these men and the next class alone are the makers of our present policy—the instructors of home official opinion.

The next class is the philanthropic party. It is commonly confused with the missionary, but there is this fundamental difference between them. The missionary, pure and simple, is a man who loves God more than he loves himself, or any man. His service (I am speaking on fundamental lines, as far as I can see) is to place in God's charge, for the glory of God, souls, that according to his belief, would otherwise go elsewhere. The philanthropist is a person who loves man; but he or she is frequently no better than people who kill lapdogs by over-feeding, or who shut up skylarks in cages, while it is quite conceivable to me, for example, that a missionary could kill a man to save his soul, a philanthropist kill his

soul to save his life, and there is in this a difference. I have never been able to get up any respectful enthusiasm for the so-called philanthropist, so that I have to speak of him with calm care; not as I have spoken of the missionary, feeling he was a person I could not really harm by criticising his methods.

It is, however, nowadays hopeless to attempt to separate these two species, distinct as I believe them to be; and they together undoubtedly constitute what is called the Mission party not only in England but in Germany. I believe this alliance has done immense harm to the true missionary, for to it I trace that tendency to harp upon horrors and general sensationalism which so sharply differentiates the modern from the classic missionary reports. Take up that noble story of Dennis de Carli and Michael Angelo of Gattina, and read it through, and then turn on to wise, clear-headed Merolla da Sorrento, and read him; you find there no sensationalism. Now and again, when deeply tried, they will say, "These people live after a beastly manner, and converse freely with the Devil," but you soon find them saying, "Among these people there are some excellent customs," and they give you full details of them, with evident satisfaction. You see it did not fundamentally matter to these early missionaries whether their prospective converts "had excellent customs" or "lived after a beastly manner," from a religious standpoint. Not one atom—they were the sort of men who would have gone for Plato, Socrates, and all the Classics gaily, holding that they were not Christians as they ought to be; but this never caused them to paint a distorted portrait of the African. This thing, I believe, the modern philanthropist has induced the modern missionary only too frequently to do, and the

other regrettable element which has induced him to do it has been the apathy of the English public, a public which unless it were stirred up by horrors would not subscribe. Again the blame is with England at home, but the harm done is paid for in West Africa. The portrait painted of the African by the majority, not all, but the majority of West African mission reports, has been that of a child, naturally innocent, led away and cheated by white traders and grievously oppressed by his own rulers. I grant you, the African taken as a whole is the gentlest kind of real human being that is made. I do not however class him with races who carry gentleness to a morbid extent, and for governmental purposes you must not with any race rely on their main characteristic alone; for example, Englishmen are honest, yet still we require the police force.

The evil worked by what we must call the missionary party is almost incalculable; from it has arisen the estrangement of English interests, as represented by our reason for adding West Africa to our Empire at all—the trader—and the English Government as represented by the Crown Colony system; and it has also led to our present policy of destroying powerful native States and the power of the African ruling classes at large. Secondarily it is the cause of our wars in West Africa. That this has not been and is not the desire of the mission party it is needless to say; that the blame is directly due to the Crown Colony system it is as needless to remark; for any reasonable system of its age would long ere now have known the African at first hand, not as it knows him, and knows him only, at its head-quarters, London, from second-hand vitiated reports. It has, nowadays, at its service the common sense and humane opinions of the English trade lords as represented by the

Chambers of Commerce of Liverpool and Manchester; but though just at present it listens to what they say—thanks to Mr. Chamberlain—yet it cannot act on their statements, but only querulously says, "Your information does not agree with our information." Allah forbid that the information of the party with whom I have had the honour to be classed should agree with that sort of information from other sources; and I would naturally desire the rulers of West Africa to recognise the benefit they now enjoy of having information of a brand that has not led to such a thing as the Sierre Leone outbreak for example, and to remember in this instance that six months before the hut tax there was put on, the Chambers had strongly advised the Government against it, and had received in reply the answer that "The Secretary of State sees no reason to suppose that the hut tax will be oppressive, or that it will be less easy to collect in Sierra Leone than in Gambia." Why, you could not get a prophetic almanac into a second issue if it were not based on truer knowledge than that which made it possible for such a thing to be said. Nevertheless, no doubt this remarkable sentence was written believing the same to be true, and confiding in the information in the hands of the Colonial Office from the official and philanthropic sources in which the Office believes.

CHAPTER XV

MORE OF THE CROWN COLONY SYSTEM

Wherein is set down the other, or main, reason against this system.

HAVING attempted to explain the internal evils or what one might call the domestic rows of the Crown colony system, I will pass on to the external evils—which although in a measure consequent on the internal are not entirely so, and this point cannot be too clearly borne in mind. Tinker it up as you may, the system will remain one pre-eminently unsuited for the administration of West Africa.

You might arrange that officials working under it should be treated better than the official now is, and the West African service be brought into line in honour with the Indian, and afford a man a good sound career. You might arrange for the Chambers of Commerce, representing the commercial factor, to have a place in Colonial Office councils. But if you did these things the Crown colony system would still remain unsuited to West Africa, because it is a system intrinsically too expensive in men and money, so that the more you develop it the more expensive it becomes. Concerning this system as applied to the West Indies a West Indian authority the other day said it was putting an elephant to draw a goat chaise;

concerning the West African application of it, I should say it was trying to open a tin case with a tortoise-shell paper knife. Of course you will say I am no authority, and you must choose between those who will tell you that only a little patience is required and the result of the present governmental system in West Africa will blossom into philanthropic and financial successes, and me who say it cannot do so but must result in making West Africa a debt-ridden curse to England. All I can say for myself is that I am animated by no dislike to any set of men and without one farthing's financial interest in West Africa. It would not affect my income if you were to put 100 per cent. ad valorem duty on every trade article in use on the Coast and flood the Coast with officials, paid as men should be paid who have to go there, namely, at least three times more than they are at present. My dislike to the present state of affairs is solely a dislike to seeing my country, to my mind, make a fool of herself, wasting men's lives in the process and deluding herself with the idea that the performance will repay her.

Personally, I cannot avoid thinking that before you cast yourself in a whole-souled way into developing anything you should have a knowledge of the nature of the thing as it is on scientific lines. Education and development unless backed by this knowledge are liable to be thrown away, or to produce results you have no use for. I remember a distressing case that occurred in West Africa and supports my opinion. A valued friend of mine, a seaman of great knowledge and experience, yet lacking in that critical spirit which inquires into the nature of things before proceeding with them, confident alone in the rectitude of his own intentions, bought a canary bird at a Canary Island. He knew that the men

who sell canaries down there are up to the sample description of deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. So he brought to bear upon the transaction a deal of subtlety, but neglected fundamental facts, whereby his triumph at having, on the whole, done the canary seller brown by getting him to take in part value for the bird a box of German colonial-grown cigars, was vanity. For weeks that gallant seaman rubbed a wet cork up and down an empty whisky bottle within the hearing of the bird, which is the proper thing to do providing things are all right in themselves, and yet nothing beyond genial twitterings rewarded his exertions. So he rubbed on for another week with even greater feeling and persuasive power, and then, to drop a veil upon this tragedy of lost endeavour, that canary laid an egg. Now, if that man had only attended to the nature of things and seen whether it were a cock or hen bird, he would not have been subjected to this grievous disappointment. Similarly, it seems to me, we are, from the governmental point of view, like that sea captain—swimming about in the West African affair with a lot of subtle details, in an atmosphere of good intentions, but not in touch with important facts; we are acting logically from faulty premises.

Now, let us grant that the Crown Colony system is not fully developed in West Africa, for if it were, you may say, it would work all right; though this I consider a most dangerous idea. Let us see what it would be if it were fully developed.

Mr. St. Loe Strachey[1] thus defines Crown Colonies:—"These are possessions which are for the most part peopled by non-European races of dark colour, and governed not by persons elected by themselves, but by a governor and

[1] *Industrial and Social Life of the Empire.* Macmillan and Co.

other officials sent out from England. The reason for this difference is a very simple one. Those colonies which are peopled by men of English and European races can provide themselves with a better government than we can provide them with from here. Hence they are given responsible governments.

"Those colonies in which the English or European element is very small can best be governed, it is found, by the Crown Colony system. (The native, dark-skinned population are not fit to govern themselves—they are too ignorant and too uncivilised,) and if the government is left entirely in the hands of the small number of whites who may happen to live in the colony, they are apt not to take enough care of the interests of the coloured inhabitants. The simplest form of the Crown Colony is that found in some of the smaller groups of islands in the West Indies. Here a governor is sent out from England, and he—helped by a secretary, a judge, and other officials—governs the island, reporting his actions to the Colonial Office, and consulting the able officials there before he takes important steps. In most cases, however, the governor has a council, either nominated from among the principal persons in the colony, or else elected by the inhabitants. In some cases—Jamaica or Barbadoes, for example—the council has very great power, and the type of government may be said to approach that of the self-governing colonies."

Now, in West Africa the system is the same as that "found in some of the smaller groups of the West Indian islands," although these West African colonies have each a nominated council of some kind. I should hesitate to say, however, "to assist the governor." Being nominated by him they can usually manage to agree with him; it is only

another hindrance or superfluous affair. Before taking any important steps the West African governor is supposed to consult the officials at the Colonial Office; but as the Colonial Office is not so well informed as the governor himself is, this can be no help to him if he be a really able man, and no check on him if he be not an able man. For, be he what he may, he is the representative of the Colonial Office; he cannot, it is true, persuade the Colonial Office to go and involve itself in rows with European continental powers, because the Office knows about them; but if he is a strong-minded man with a fad he can persuade the Colonial Office to let him try that fad on the natives or the traders, because the Colonial Office does not know the natives nor the West African trade.

You see, therefore, you have in the Governor of a West African possession a man in a bad position. He is aided by no council worth having, no regular set of experts; he is held in by another council equally non-expert, except in the direction of continental politics. He may keep out of mischief; he could, if he were given either time or inducement to study the native languages, laws, and general ethnology of his colony, do much good; but how can he do these things, separated from the native population as he necessarily is, by his under officials, and with his time taken up, just as every official's time is taken up under the Crown Colony system, with a mass of red-tape clerkwork that is unnecessary and intrinsically valueless? I do not pretend to any personal acquaintance with English West African Governors. I only look on their affairs from outside, but I have seen some great men among them. One of them who is dead would, I believe, had the climate spared him, have become a man whom every one interested in West

Africa would have respected and admired. He came from a totally different region, the Straits Settlements. He found his West African domain in a lethargic mess, and he hit out right and left, falling, like the rain, on the just and the unjust. I do not wish you to take his utterances or his actions as representing him; but from the spirit of them it is clear he would have become a great blessing to the Coast had he but lived long enough. I am aware he was unpopular from his attempts to enforce the ill-drafted Land Ordinance, but primarily responsible for this ill-judged thing he was not.

In addition to Sir William Maxwell there have been, and are still, other Governors representative of what is best in England; but, circumstanced as they are under this system, continually interrupted as their work is by death or furloughs home, neither England nor West Africa gets one-tenth part of the true value of these men.

In addition to the Governor, there are the other officials, medical, legal, secretarial, constabulary, and customs. The majority of these are engaged in looking after each other and clerking. Clerking is the breath of the Crown Colony system, and customs what it feeds on. Owing to the climate it is practically necessary to have a double staff in all these departments,—that is what the system would have if it were perfect; as it is, some official's work is always being done by a subordinate; it may be equally well done, but it is not equally well paid for, and there is no continuity of policy in any department, except those which are entirely clerk, and the expense of this is necessarily great. The main evil of this want of continuity is of course in the Governors—a Governor goes out, starts a new line of policy, goes home on furlough leaving in charge the Colonial

Secretary, who does not by all means always feel enthusiastic towards that policy; so it languishes. Governor comes back, goes at it again like a giant refreshed, but by no means better acquainted with local affairs for having been away; then he goes home again, or dies, or gets a new appointment; a brand new Governor comes out, he starts a new line of policy, perhaps has a new Colonial Secretary into the bargain; anyhow the thing goes on wavering, not advancing. The only description I have heard of our policy in West African Colonies that seems to me to do it justice is that given by a medical friend of mine, who said it was a coma accompanied by fits.

Of course this would not be the case if the Colonial Office had a definite detailed policy of its own, and merely sent out men to carry it out; but this the Colonial Office has not got and cannot have, because it has not got the scientific and commercial facts of West Africa in its possession. It has therefore to depend on the Governors it sends out; and these, as aforesaid, are men of divers minds. One Governor is truly great on drains; he spends lots of money on them. Another Governor thinks education and a cathedral more important; during his reign drains languish. Yet another Governor comes along and says if there are schools wanted they should be under non-sectarian control, but what is wanted is a railway; and so it goes on, and of course leads to an immense waste of money. And this waste of money is a far more serious thing than it looks; for it is from it that the policy has arisen, of increasing customs dues to a point that seriously hampers trade development, and the far more serious evil of attempting directly as well as indirectly to tax the native population.

I am bound to say I believe any ordinary Englishman

would be fairly staggered if he went out to West Africa and saw what there was to show for the expenditure of the last few years in our Crown Colonies there,[1] and knew that all that money had been honestly expended in the main, that none of it had been appropriated by the officials, that they had only had their pay, and that none too great.

But, you will say, after all, if West Africa is as rich as it is said to be, surely it can stand a little wasteful expenditure, and support an even more expensive administration than it now has. All I can say is, that it can stand wasteful expenditure, but only up to a certain point, which is now passed; it would perhaps be more true to say it could stand wasteful expenditure before the factor of the competition of French and German colonies alongside came in; and that a wasteful expenditure that necessitates unjust methods of raising revenue, such as direct taxation on the natives, is a thing West Africa will not stand at all. Of course you can do it; you can impose direct taxation on the native population, but you cannot make it financially pay to do so; for one thing, the collection of that tax will require a considerable multiplication of officials black and white, the black section will by their oppressive methods engender war, and the joint body will consume more than the amount that can be collected. From a fiscal standpoint direct taxation of a non-Mohammedanised or non-Christianised community is rank foolishness, for reasons known to every ethnologist. As for the natural riches of West Africa, I am a profound believer in them, and regard West Africa, taken as a whole, as one of the richest regions in

[1] For Lagos, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and Gambia from 1892 to 1896, £2,364,266.

the world; but, as Sir William Maxwell said, "I am convinced that, from causes wholly unpreventable, West Africa is and must remain a place with certain peculiar dangers of its own"[1]; therefore it requires most careful, expert handling. It is no use your trying to get its riches out by a set of hasty amateur experiments; it is no use just dumping down capital on it and calling these goings on "Developing the resources," or "Raising the African in the plane of civilisation;" because these goings on are not these things, they are but sacrifices on the altars of folly and idleness.

Properly managed, those parts of West Africa which our past apathy has left to us are capable of being made into a group of possessions before which the direct value to England, in England, of all the other regions that we hold in the world would sink into insignificance.

Sir William Maxwell, when he referred to "causes wholly unpreventable," was referring mainly to the unhealthiness of West Africa. There seems no escape from this great drawback. Every other difficulty connected with it one can imagine removable by human activity and ingenuity—even the labour difficulty—but, I fear, not so the fever. Although this is not a thing to discourage England from holding West Africa, it is a thing which calls for greater forethought in the administration of it than she need give to a healthy region. In a healthy region it does not matter so much whether there is an excess over requirements in the number of men employed to administer it, but in one with a death rate of at least 35 per cent. of white men it does matter.

[1] Forty-eighth annual report Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, 1898.

I confess it is this excessive expenditure of men which I dislike most in the Crown Colony system, though I know it cannot help it; it is in the make of the thing. If these men were even employed in some great undertaking it would be less grievous; but they are many of them entirely taken up with clerk work, and all of them have to waste a large percentage of their time on it. Some of the men undoubtedly get to like this, but it is a morbid taste. I know one of our possessions where the officials even carry on their personal quarrels with each other on government paper in a high official style, when it would be better if they put aside an hour a week and went and punched each other's heads, and gave the rest of their time to studying native law and languages and pottering about the country getting up information on it at large, so that the natives would become familiarised with the nature of Englishmen first-hand, instead of being dependent for their knowledge of them on interpreters and the set of subordinate native officials and native police.

I wish that it lay in my power to place before you merely a set of figures that would show you the present state of our West African affairs, but such figures do not exist. Practically speaking, there are no reliable figures for West African affairs. They are not cooked, but you know what figures are—unless they be complete and in their proper stations, they are valueless.

The figures we have are those which appear in "The Colonial Annual Series" of reports. These are not annual; for example, the Gold Coast one was not published for three years; but no matter, when they are published they are misleading enough, unless you know things not

mentioned in them but connected with them. However, we will just run through the figures published for one West African Crown Colony. For many reasons I am sorry to have to take those regarding Sierra Leone, but I must, as at present they are the most correct available.

Now the element of error which must be allowed for in these arises from the proximity of the French colony of French Guinea, which is next door to Sierra Leone. That colony has been really developing its exports. Goods have, up to last year, come out through our colony of Sierra Leone, and have been included with the exports of Sierra Leone itself, though Sierra Leone has not dwelt on this interesting fact. And, equally, since 1890 goods going into French Guinea have gone in through Sierra Leone, and though traceable with care, have been put in with the total of the imports. So you see it is a little difficult to find out whether it has been French Guinea or Sierra Leone that has really been doing the trade mentioned in the figures.

Nevertheless, it has been customary to take these joint, mixed up figures and get happy over "the increase of trade in Sierra Leone during the past ten years"; but a little calm consideration will prevent you from falling into this idle error.

Personally I think that if you are cautious you will try and estimate the trade by the exports; for among the imports there are Government stores, railway material, &c., things that will have some day to be paid for, because it is the rule not to assist a colony under the system until it has been reduced to a West Indian condition; whereas the exports give you the buying power of the colony, and show the limits of the trade which may be expected to

be done under existing conditions. Now, the annual total exports during the five years ending—

1875,	amounted	in	value	to, £396,709
1880,	„	„	„	£368,855
1885,	„	„	„	£386,848
1890,	„	„	„	£333,390
1895,	„	„	„	£435,175

These figures show for the twenty-five years an increase of less than 10 per cent., or about ½ per cent. per annum; and this is not so very thrilling when one comes to think that that 10 per cent., and probably more, is showing the increase in the trade not of Sierra Leone, but of French Guinea, and remembers that in 1874 the exports were £481,894, an amount they have not since touched.

Then again even in error you are never quite sure if your Colonial Annual is keeping line; sometimes you will get one by a careful conscientious secretary who takes no end of trouble, and tells you lots of things which you would like to hear about next year, only next year you don't. For example, in Sierra Leone affairs the report for 1887 gave you the imports for consumption in the colony, while that of 1896 represented the total imports, including those afterwards shipped to French Guinea and elsewhere; and again, in estimating the value of the imports Gambia adds the cost of freight and insurance to the invoice value of imports, and the cost of package to the declared value of exports. So far, only Gambia does this, but at any moment an equally laudable spirit might develop in one of the other colonies, and cause further distraction to the student of their figures.

Besides these clerking errors of omission, there is a

constant unavoidable error arising from the so-called smuggling done by the native traders in the hinterland. Remember that colonies which you see neatly enough marked on a map of West Africa with French, English, German, are not really each surrounded by a set of Great Walls of China. For example, under the present arrangement with France, if France keeps to that beautiful Article IX. in the Niger Convention and does not tax English goods more than she at present taxes French goods on the Ivory coast—cottons of English manufacture will be able to be sold 10 per cent. cheaper in the French territory than in the adjacent English Gold Coast.

Up to the present time it has paid the native hinterland trader to come down into the Gold Coast and buy his cotton goods, for English cottons suit his West African markets better than other makes, that is to say they have a higher buying power; and then he went down into the French Ivory Coast and bought his spirits and guns, which were cheaper there because of lower duty. Having got his selection together he went off and did business with the raw material sellers, and sold the raw material he had purchased back to the two Coasts from which he had bought his selection, sending the greater part of it to the best market for the time being. Now you have changed that, or, rather, you have given France the power to change it by selling English cottons cheaper than they can be sold in your own possessions, and thereby rendered it unnecessary for the hinterland traders to buy on the Gold Coast at all. It will remain necessary for him to buy on the Ivory Coast, for spirits and guns he must have; and if he can get his cottons at the same place as he gets these, so much the better for him. It is doubtful, however, whether henceforth

it will be worth his while to come down and sell his raw material in your possessions at all. He may browse around your interior towns and suck the produce out of them, but it will be to the enrichment of the French colony next door; and, of course, as things are even now, this sort of thing, which goes on throughout all the various colonies of France, England, Germany and Portugal, does not tend to give true value to the official figures concerning trade published by any one of them.

I have no intention, however, of dwelling on the various methods employed by native smugglers with a view to aiding their suppression. It may be a hereditary taint contracted by my ancestors while they sojourned in Devon, it may be private personal villainy of my own; but anyhow, I never feel, as from an official standpoint I ought, towards smugglers. I do not ask you to regard the African native trader as a sweet innocent who does not realise the villainy of his doings,—he knows all about it; but only once did I feel harshly towards him over smuggling. A native trader had arranged to give me a lift, as it were, in his canoe, and I noticed, with a flattered vanity and a feeling of gratitude, how very careful he had been to make me quite comfortable in the stern, with a perfect little nest of mats and cloths. When we reached our destination and that nest was taken to pieces, I saw that what you might call the backbone of the affair was three kegs of gunpowder, a case of kerosine, and some packages of lucifer matches. That rascal fellow black, as Barbot would call him, had expected we should meet the customs patrol boat, and, basely encroaching on the chivalry of the white man towards the white woman judged that I and my nest would not be overhauled. If there had been a guardian cherub for the Brussels Convention or for Customs doubtless I should have been blown sky

high and have afforded material for a moral tale called "The Smuggler's Awful End," but there are no cherubs who watch over Customs or the Brussels Convention in West Africa and I have no intention of volunteering for such an appointment.

But to return to the Sierra Leone finances and the relationship which the expenditure of that colony bears to the revenue. The increase in the imports is apparently the thing depended on to justify the idea that as the trade has increased the governmental expenditure has a right to do so likewise. The imports increase in 1896 is given as £90,683. From this you must deduct for railway material, £26,000, and for the increased specie import, £19,591, which leaves you an increase of imports of £45,092 from 1887—1896, and remember a good percentage of this remainder of £45,092 belongs to French Guinea.

Now the expenditure on the government of Sierra Leone has increased from £58,534 in 1887 to £116,183, being an increase at the rate of 99·1 per cent., whereas the exports during the same period have increased at the rate of 34·8 per cent., or from £333,157 to £449,033.

In other words, whereas in 1887 the government expenditure amounted to 17·5 per cent., the exports in 1896 amounted to 25·4 per cent. The sum of £40,579 of this increase is credited to police, gaols, transport, and public works;[1] and if this is to be the normal rate of

[1]

		£	Increase.
Expenditure on police and gaols,	1896	31,504	£
" " "	1887	3,037	28,467
Expenditure on transport	1896	10,091	
" " "	1887	3,298	6,793
Expenditure on public works.....	1896	6,736	
" " "	1887	1,417	5,319
Aggregate increase.....			40,579

increase, the prospects of the colony are serious; for it contains no rich mineral deposit as far as is at present known, nor are there in it any great native states. As far as we know, Sierra Leone must for an immense period depend on bush products collected by the natives, whose trade wants are only a few luxuries. For it must be remembered that in all these West African colonies there is not one single thing Europeans can sell to the natives that is of the nature of a true necessity, a thing the natives must have or starve. There is but one thing that even approaches in the West African markets to what wheat is in our own—that thing is tobacco. Next in importance to it, but considerably lower, is the group of trade articles—gunpowder, guns, and spirits, next again salt, and below these four staples come Manchester goods and miscellanies; the whole of the rest that lies in the power of civilisation to offer to the West African markets are things that are luxuries, things that will only be purchased by the native when he is in a state of prosperity. This subject I have, however, endeavoured to explain elsewhere.[1]

We have for Sierra Leone, fortunately, a scientific authority to refer to on this matter of the natural resources of the country, and the amount of the natural riches we may presume we can take into account when arranging fiscal matters. This authority is the report of Mr. Scott-Elliott on the district traversed by the Anglo-French Boundary Commission.[2]

Regarding mineral, the report states "that the only

[1] "The Liquor Traffic in West Africa," *Fortnightly Review*, April, 1898.

[2] *Colonial Reports, Miscellaneous, No.* 3, 1893. G. F. Scott Elliott, M.A., F.L.S., and C. A. Raisin, B.Sc.

mineral of importance is iron, of which the country appears to contain a very large amount. There is a particularly rich belt of titaniferous iron ore in the hills behind Sierra Leone."

Titaniferous iron is an excellent thing in its way, and good for steel making; but it exists nearer home and in cheaper worked regions than Sierra Leone.

The soil is grouped by the report into three classes:

"1. That of the plateaux and hills above 2,000, or sometimes descending to 1,000 feet, which is due to the disintegration of gneiss and granite rocks.

"2. The red laterite which covers almost invariably all the lower hills from the sea level to 1,000 or 2,000 feet.

"3. The alluvium, due either to the action of the mangroves along the coast, or to rivers and streams inland."

These soils are capable of and do produce fine timber, rubber, oil and rice, and the general tropical food stuffs, but these, except the three first, are not very valuable export articles. Whether it is possible to enhance the agricultural value of the alluvium regions by growing tobacco, jute, coffee, cocoa, cotton and sugar, for export, is by some authorities regarded as doubtful on account of the labour problem; but at any rate, if these industries were taken in hand on a large scale, a scale sufficient materially to alter the resources of a West African colony, they would require many years of fostering, and it would be long before they could contribute greatly to the resources of such a colony as Sierra Leone, in the face of the organised production and cheaper labour, wherewith the supply now in the markets of Europe could be competed with.

I have had the advantage of associating with German and Portuguese and French planters of coffee and cocoa.

These are the planters who up to the present have been the most successful in West Africa. I do not say because they are better men, but because they have better soils and better labour than there is in our colonies. By these gentlemen I have been industriously educated in soils, &c.; and from what I have learnt about this matter I am bound regretfully to say that most of the soil of the English possessions is not really rich, taken in the main. There are in places patches of rich soil; and the greater part of our soil will be all the better this day 10,000 years hence; but at present the soil is mainly sour clay, slime and skin soils, skin soils over rock, skin soils over sour clay, skin soils over water-logged soil. We have, alas, not got the rich volcanic earth of Cameroon, Fernando Po, and San Thome and Principe. The natives who work the soil understand it fairly well, and negro agriculture is in a well-developed state, and their farms are most carefully tended and well kept. The rule along the Bight of Benin and Biafra is to change the soil of the farm at least every third year; this they do by cutting down a new bit of bush, burning the bush on the ground at the end of the dry season, and planting the crops. The old farm is then allowed to grow bush or long grass, whichever the particular district goes in for, until the time comes to work back on that piece of land again, when the bush which has grown is in its turn cut down and the ground replanted. This burning of the trees or grass is clearly regarded by the native agriculturist as manuring; it is practically the only method of manuring available for them in a country where cattle in quantities are not kept. It is a wasteful way with timber and rubber growing on the ground of course; but not so wildly wasteful as it looks, for your Negro agriculturist does not go to

make his farm on bits of forest that require very hard clearing work. He clears as easily as he can by means of collecting the great fluffy seed bunches of a certain tree which are inflammable and adding to them all the other inflammable material he can get; he then places these bonfires in the bit of forest he wants to clear and sets fire to them on a favourable night, when the proper sort of breeze is blowing to fan the flames; when the conflagration is over, he fells a few of the trees and leaves the rest standing scorched but not killed. Moreover, of course an African gentleman cannot go and make his farm anywhere he likes: he has to stick to the land which belongs to his family, and work round and round on that. This gives a highly untidy aspect to the family estate, you might think; considering the extent of it, a very small percentage must be kept under cultivation and the rest neglected. But this is not really so; if you were to go and take away from him a bit of the neglected land, you would be taking his farm, say for the year after next and grievously inconvenience him, and he would know it.

The native method of making farms does not, indeed, do so much harm in well-watered, densely-populated regions like those of Sierra Leone or the Niger Delta; but it does do an immense amount of harm in regions that are densely populated and require to make extensive farms, more particularly in the regions of Lagos and the Gold Coast, where the fertile belt is only a narrow ribbon, edged on the one side by the sand sea of the Sahara, and on the other by the salt sea of the South Atlantic. You can see the result of it in the district round Accra, which has always been heavily populated; for hundreds of years the forest has been kept down by agricultural enterprise. Consequences are, the rainfall is now diminished to a point that threatens to extinguish

agriculture, at any rate, a sufficient agriculture to support the local population; and it is not too much to say you can read on the face of the Accra plain famines to come. There is little reason to doubt that both the African deserts, the Sahara and the Kalahari, are advancing towards the Equator. Round Loanda you come across a sand-logged region of some fifty square miles, where you get the gum shed by forests that have gone, humanly speaking, never to return; human agency is largely responsible, it is like sawing the branch of a tree partially through, and then the wind breaks it off. Forest destruction in lands adjacent to deserts is the same thing; the forest is destroyed to a certain extent, an extent that diminishes the rainfall and makes it unable to resist the desert winds, and then—finis.

In the regions of the double rains in the great forest belt of Africa things are different, so you cannot generalise for West Africa at large in this matter. It is one thing for forest destruction to go on in the Gold Coast, quite another for it to go on in Calabar or Congo Français, where men fight back the forest as Dutchmen fight the sea.

But I apologise. This, you will say, is not connected with Governmental expenditure, &c.; but it is to me a more amusing subject, and indirectly has a bearing; for example, Government expenditure in the direction of instituting a Forestry Department would be right enough in some regions, but unnecessary in others.

To return to this agriculture in Sierra Leone. Well, it is, like all West African agriculture, spade husbandry. It is concerned with the cultivation of vegetables for human consumption alone. In the interior of Sierra Leone and throughout the Western Soudan, for which Sierra Leone was once a principal port, there is a fair cattle country,

and an old established one, as is shown by the exports of hides mentioned in the writers of the seventeenth century. Yet it would be idle for the most enthusiastic believer in West Africa to pretend that the Western Soudan is coming on to compete with Argentina or Australia in the export of frozen meat; the climate is against it, and therefore this cattle country can only be represented in trade in a hide and horn export. Wool—as the sheep won't wear it, preferring hair instead and that of poor quality—need not I think be looked forward to from West Africa at all.

I have taken the published accounts of Sierra Leone, because, as I have said, they are the most complete. They are also, in the main, the most typical. It is true that Sierra Leone has not the gold wealth, nor the developing timber industry of the Gold Coast; but if you ignore French Guinea, and include the things belonging to it with the Sierra Leone totals, you will get a fairly equivalent result. Lagos has not yet shown a mineral export, but it and the Gold Coast have shown of late years an immensely increased export of rubber. Rubber, oil, and timber are the three great riches of our West African possessions, the things that may be relied on, as being now of great value and capable of immense expansion. But these things can only be made serviceable to the markets of the world and a source of riches to England by the co-operation of the natives of the country. In other words, you must solve the labour problem on the one hand, and increase the prosperity of the native population on the other, in order to make West Africa pay you back the value of the life and money already paid for her. This solution of the labour problem and this co-operation of the natives with you, the Crown Colony system will never gain for you, because it

is too expensive for you and unjust to them, not intentionally, not vindictively nor wickedly, but just from ignorance. It destroys the native form of society, and thereby disorganises labour. It has no power of re-organising it. You hear that people are leaving Coomassie and Benin, instead of flocking in to those places, as they were expected to after the destruction of the local tyrannies. English influence in West Africa, represented as it now is by three separate classes of Englishmen, with no common object of interest, or aim in policy, is not a thing capable of re-organising so difficult a region. I have taken the Sierra Leone figures because, as I have said, they are the most complete and typical, and the state of the trade and the expenditure on the Government are those prior to the hut tax war. So they cannot be ascribed to it, nor can the plea be lodged that the expenditure was an enforced one. These figures merely show you the thing that led up to the hut tax war and the heavy enforced expenditure it has and will entail, and my reason for detaining you with them is the conviction that a similar policy pursued in our other colonies will lead to the same results—the destruction of trade and the imposition on the colonies of a debt that their natural resources cannot meet unless we are prepared to go in for forced labour and revert to the slave trade policy.

It seems clear enough that our present policy in the Crown Colonies, of a rapidly increasing expenditure in the face of a steadily falling trade, must necessarily lead our Government to seek for new sources of revenue beyond customs dues. New sources under our present system can only be found in direct taxation of the native population; the result of this is now known.

I will not attempt to deal fully with the figures we

possess for our remaining Crown Colonies in Western Africa,—Gambia, the Gold Coast, and Lagos,—but merely refer to a few points regarding them that have so far been published. When the result of the policy pursued in these colonies leads to the inevitable row, and the figures are dealt with by competent men, there is, to my mind, no doubt that a state equal to that of Sierra Leone as a fool's paradise will be discovered; and the deplorable part of the thing is, that the trade palavers of the Chambers and the Colonial Office will give to hasty politicians the idea that West Africa is not worthy of Imperial attention, and large quantities of the blame for this failure of our colonies will be put down quite unjustly to French interference. That French interference has troubled our colonies there, no one will attempt to deny; or that if it had been acting on them when they were in a healthy state it would merely have had a tonic effect, as it has had on the Royal Niger Company's territories; but, acting on the Crown Colonies in their present state, French influence has naturally been poisonous. Even I, not given to sweet mouth as I am, shrink from saying what has been the true effect on the Crown Colonies of England of the policy pursued by us towards French advance. This only will I say, that the French policy is no discredit to France. Regarding the financial condition of Gambia it is not necessary for us to worry ourselves. Gambia is a nuisance to France. She loves to have high dues, and she cannot have them round Gambia way. She has had to encyst it, or it would be to her Senegal and French Guinea possessions a regular main to lay on smuggling. Knowing this she has encysted it; it pays better to smuggle from French Guinea into Gambia or Sierra Leone than from Gambia or Sierra Leone into

the French possessions. This is a grave commercial position for us, but to it is largely owing the advance of the prosperity of these French possessions during the past three years.

The Gold Coast has on the west a French possession, the Ivory Coast, on the east the German Togoland. Togo is a narrow strip, and to its east and surrounding it to the north is the French colony of Dahomey, whose recent expansion has told heavily on its next-door neighbours, both Togo and the English colony to the east, Lagos. I give below the latest available figures for the foreign West African possessions.[1]

[1] French colonies—

	Imports.		Exports	
	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.
	£	£	£	£
Senegal.....	1,047,000	1,167,000	783,000	845,000
French Guinea ...	185,000	240,000*	231,000	201,000*
Ivory Coast	186,000	188,000	176,000	189,000
Dahomey.....	389,000	330,000	364,000	231,000
French Congo ...	192,000	†	190,000	†

* For nine months only. † No statistics.

Trade of Dahomey and the Ivory Coast for the first three months of 1898—

	Imports.	Exports.	Total trade.
	£	£	£
Ivory Coast	58,658	58,560	117,518
Dahomey	84,064	72,771	156,835

German possessions—

	Imports.			Exports.		
	1895.	1896.	1897.	1895.	1896.	1897.
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Togoland ...	117,000	94,000	99,000	152,000	83,000	39,000
Cameroons	283,000	268,000	*	204,000	198,000	*
Total ...	400,000	362,000	*	356,000	281,000	*

* No figures available for calendar year. *Board of Trade Journal*, September, 1898.

Unfortunately there are no figures available for the French Sudan which would represent the real value of the trade; the total value of trade is, however, considerable. You must remember that in dealing with French colonies you are dealing with those of a nation not gifted with commercial intelligence; and that, in spite of the perpetual hampering of trade in French colonies, the granting of concessions to French firms who have not the capital to work them, but are only able to prevent any one else doing so, the high differential tariffs, in some cases 100 per cent., which up to the present time have been levied on English goods, &c.; the English traders nevertheless work in the markets of the French colonies, and work mainly on French goods. Of the £117,518 representing the Ivory Coast trade for the first quarter of this year, over £76,000 was English trade, and of the Dahomey £156,835 for the same period, £131,705. In reading the imports figures for these French colonies in Upper Guinea, you must remember that those imports include material for the well directed, unamiable intention of France to cut us off from what she regards as her own Western Soudan; it is a form of investment far more profitable than our expenditure on railways, gaols, prisons, and frontier police. It is one that, presuming this highly unlikely thing—France becoming commercially intelligent—would any year now enable her entirely to pocket the West African trade down to Lagos from Senegal. She may do it at any moment, though it is a very remote possibility. So we will return to the Gold Coast finances, though our authorities on them are at present meagre.

In 1892 the Gold Coast government was financially in a flourishing condition. On the 1st of January, 1891, there

was a sum of £75,181 4*s.* 4*d.* standing to the credit of the colony, which was increased to £127,796 2*s.* 3*d.* on the 1st of January, 1892, and to £152,766 16*s.* 7*d.* on the 1st of January, 1893, and the colony had no public debt. There was no native direct taxation. The Customs dues were lower than they are now. The extremely careful official who drew up the report shows evidence of realising that Customs represent an indirect taxation on the native population, for he says: "In Sierra Leone and Lagos the taxation per head is very much higher (than 2*s.* 5*d.* per head), in the former nine times, and in the latter seven times."[1] However, in all three colonies, apart from the attempts at direct taxation, the indirect taxation on the native has considerably increased by now.

The report for 1894 shows the colony still progressing rapidly, the trade of it amounting in value to £1,663,173 19*s.* 9*d.*, of which £812,830 8*s.* 10*d.* represented the imports, and £850,343 10*s.* 11*d.* the exports. The expenditure showed a large increase as compared with previous years. It amounted to £226,931 19*s.* 4*d.*, being £8,670 13*s.* 7*d.* in excess of the revenue for the year, and £47,997 7*s.* 11*d.* more than in 1893. The principal items of increase were public works, upon which the sum of £54,163 0*s.* 3*d.* was spent, and the expedition in defence of the protected district of Attabubu against an Ashanti invasion, which cost £10,778 11*s.* The Gold Coast assets on 31st of December, 1894, stood at £166,944 8*s.* 7*d.*[2] Then came the last Ashanti war, regarding which I beg to refer you to Dr. Freeman's book.[3] No one can deny that he has both experience and intelligence enough to justify

[1] *Colonial Annual*, No. 88, Gold Coast for 1892, published 1893.

[2] Ditto, No. 188. [3] *Ashanti and Jaman.* Constable, 1898.

him in offering his opinion on the matter. I entirely accept his statements from my knowledge of native affairs elsewhere in West Africa. Anyhow, the last Ashanti war absorbed a good deal of the assets of the Gold Coast. There is no published authority to cite, but I do not think there is an asset now standing to the credit of the Gold Coast Colony, unless it be a loan.

The income for the Gold Coast Colony in 1896 was £237,460 6*s.* 7*d.*, the expenditure £282,277 15*s.* 9*d.* The exports £792,111, against £877,804 in 1895; but the imports were £910,000, against £981,537. Since 1896 the Customs dues have risen; but, *per contra*, the expenditure has also risen, in consequence of the expenses arising from the occupation of Ashanti, and the Gold Coast railway. The occupation of Ashanti and the railway must be looked on in the light of investments—investments that will be profitable or unprofitable, according to their administration, which one must trust will be careful, for they are both things you cannot just dump your money down on and be done with, for the up-keep expenses of both are necessarily large.

The subject of West African railways is one that all who are interested in the future of our possessions there should study most carefully, for two main reasons. Firstly, that there is possibly no other way in which money can be spent so unprofitably and extensively as on railways in such a region. Secondly, because railways are in several districts there—districts with no water carriage possibilities—simply essential to the expansion of trade. In other words, if you make your railway through the right district, in the right way, it is a thing worth having, a sound investment. If you do not, it is a thing you are better without;

not an investment, but an extravagance. The cost of its construction must fall on the colony, alike in money and the distraction, from ordinary trade, of the local labour supply. In both countries the cost of a railway out there is necessarily great. I hastily beg to observe I am not aiming at a rivalry with Martin Tupper in saying this, but am only driven to it by so many people in their haste saying "Oh, for goodness gracious sake! let the Government make a railway anywhere; it's done little enough for us, and any railway is better than none."

There has been considerable difficulty over the Gold Coast Railway already, though it is only just now entering on the phase of actual existence. Surveys have been made for it in all directions. Surveys are expensive things out there. But the general idea the Government gave the Chambers of Commerce was that, at any rate, this railway was to run up into Ashanti, and be a great general trade artery for the Colony. The other day Manchester found out, quite unexpected like, that the Government whose affections Commerce had regarded as safely and properly set on the hinterland trade was off, if you please, flirting round the corner with a group of gold mines at Tarquah, and intended, nay, was even then proceeding with the undertaking of running the one and only Gold Coast railway just up to Tarquah, and no further, until this section paid. Manchester, very properly shocked at this fickleness in the Government and its heartless abandonment of the hinterland trade, said things, interesting and excited things, in its *Guardian*; but, beyond illustrating the truth of the old adage that it's "well to be off with the old love before you are on with the new," things of no avail.

This Tarquah railway is estimated to cost £5,000 per mile. It is to be financed by a loan, raised by the Crown Colony Agents, of £250,000. We have ample reason to believe that this £5,000 per mile will not represent one-third of its final cost from demonstrations by the Uganda, Congo Belge, and Senegal railways; more particularly are we so assured from the knowledge that the railway's construction will be in the hands of nominees of the Crown Agents, whose method of arranging for the construction of these railways is curious. They do not invite tenders for material or freight in the open market, and they do not give the taxed people in the country itself any opportunity for contracting for the supply of as much local material as possible—things it would be alike fair and business-like to do. Exceedingly curious, moreover, is the fact that the nominees of the Crown Agents' employers are not subject to the control of the local governmental authorities on the Coast, their sole connection with the affair apparently being confined to the passing of ordinances, as per instruction from the Colonial Office, authorising loans for the payment of the debt incurred by making the railway.

There is no doubt that any Gold Coast railway which is ever to pay even for its coal must run through a rich bit of the local gold reefs. Similarly, there is no doubt that the gold mines of the Gold Coast have been terribly kept back by lack of transport facilities for the machinery necessary to work them; but there is, nevertheless, evidently much that is unsound in the present railway scheme. If the charge for it, as some suggest, were to be thrown on the gold mines, it would be as heavy a charge as the old bad transport was, and they would be no less hampered. If, as is most likely, the charge for the railway

be thrown on the general finance of the colony, it will be a drain on other forms of trade, without in any way improving them; in fact, during its construction, it will absorb labour from the general trade—oil, rubber, and timber—and, if it extensively increases the gold-mining industry, it will keep the labour tied to it chronically, to the disadvantage of other trades.

Lagos, our next Crown Colony, is a very rich possession, and under Sir Alfred Moloney, who discovered the use of the Kicksia Africana as a rubber tree, and Sir Gilbert Carter, who fostered the industry and opened the trade roads, sprang in a few years into a phenomenal prosperity. Then came the French aggression on its hinterland, the seizing of Nikki, which was one of those *foci* of trade routes, though possibly, as many have said, a non-fertile bit of country in itself. To give you some idea of the bound up in prosperity made by Lagos, the exports in 1892 were £577,083; in 1895, £985,595. The main advance has been in rubber, which in 1896 was exported from Lagos to the value of £347,721. Early in this year, however, the state of the Lagos trade was considered so unsatisfactory that a local commission to inquire into the causes of this state of affairs was appointed.

The publication of the Government Trade Returns for 1897 supported the long grumble that had been going on about the bad state of trade in Lagos, the imports for 1897 showing a decrease on those of 1895 by £67,474. The *Board of Trade Journal*, quoting from the *Lagos Weekly Record* of February 28th, 1898, says, "An examination of the export returns affords a clue to the direction of such decrease. It is to be noted that notwithstanding that the export of rubber in 1897 shows an excess of

£13,367 above that exported in 1895, yet in the aggregate of the total exports of the two years that of 1897 shows a decrease of £193,745; this is due to the great falling off which is perceptible in the palm oil and kernel trade, which together show a decrease in 1897 of £162,580 as compared with the quantities exported in 1895; while as compared with the exports in 1896 the decrease amounts to £114,773. The returns show a steady and increasing decline in the exports of these products, for while the decrease in 1896 as compared with 1895 was only £47,807, the decrease had risen in 1897 as compared with the previous year to £114,773, as already intimated, which implies that there has been a further falling off of the trade to the extent of nearly £67,000. This manifest excessive diminution in what must be regarded as the staple commodities of the trade is undoubtedly a serious indication, for though these commodities come under the classification of jungle products they are not liable to exhaustion as are the rubber or timber industries, and hence they form the only reliable commodities upon which the trade must expand. The dislocation of the labour system in the hinterland is no doubt responsible in a large measure for the falling off in the yield of these products, while in many instances they have been abandoned for the more remunerative rubber business. But, be the circumstances what they may, it is evident that there has been an actual decrease of trade to the extent of over £114,000."

This was the state of affairs the local committee was appointed to deal with. Its discussions were long and careful. I will not attempt to drag you through its final report, which a grossly ungrateful public in Lagos sniffed at because

it merely seemed carefully to reproduce every one's opinion on the causes of the falling off of trade and to agree with it solemnly; but, like the rest of the local world, it made no sweeping suggestion of means whereby things could be altered. Since the committee, however, was formed, there has been a greater interest taken in expenditure, healthy in its way, but too often ignoring the fact, that it is not so much the amount of money that is spent governmentally that constitutes waste, but the things on which it is expended. Large sums have been spent in Lagos, I am informed, on building a Government House that every valuable Governor ought to be paid to keep out of, so unhealthy is its situation, and again on bridging a lagoon that has no particular sound bottom to it worth mentioning.

That such forms of expenditure are not the necessary grooves into which a place like Lagos is driven in order to get rid of its money is undoubted. The local press at any rate indicates other grooves; for example here is a cheerful little paragraph:

"*A propos* of what was said in your last issue about the grave-diggers, there is no doubt that something should be done to relieve the men from the strain of work to which they are continuously subjected. The demands of a constantly increasing death rate, which has caused the cemeteries to be enlarged, make it necessary that the number of grave-diggers should be increased. Besides, these men are poorly paid for the work they do. Of the twenty grave-diggers, six are paid at the rate of 1*s.* per diem, and the rest at the rate of 10*d.* They have no holidays, either, like other people. While the Government labourers, of whom there is a host, may skulk half their time, the hard-working

grave-digger is at it from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day, Sundays included, for the Grim Reaper is ever busy. The Keeper of the graveyards, also, has much to do for the paltry salary he receives. I would earnestly appeal to the authorities to do something to raise the burden of this overworked staff."[1] So would I, but rather in the direction of giving the "Grim Reaper" and the grave-diggers fewer people to bury. I must also give you another beautiful little bit of local colour, although it suggests further expenditure. "It is satisfactory to note that the Chamber of Commerce intends to take up the question of the swamp near the petroleum magazine. Since the Government made the causeway leading to the dead-house and cut off the tidal inflow, the upper portion of the swamp has been formed into a most noxious disease-breeding sink, into which refuse of all kinds is thrown, the stagnant waters and refuse combining, under the effects of the sun, to emit a most formidable pestilential effluvia. In the interests of humanity something should be done to abate this nuisance."[2]

However, I leave these local questions of Lagos town. They just present a pretty picture of the difficulties that surround dealing with a place that has by nature swamps, that must have dead-houses, grave-diggers, and extensive cemetery accommodation, and that is peopled by natives who will instinctively throw refuse into any hole; with evidently a large death rate in the native population and a published death rate in whites of 153 per thousand. Let us now return to the higher finance.

"The total expenditure of Lagos in 1888 amounted to

[1] *Lagos Standard*, September 7, 1898.

[2] *Lagos Weekly Record*, September 10, 1898.

£62,735 15*s.* 11*d.* The expenditure has risen in 1898 to £192,760, which gives an excess of £130,025. The total cost of the staff in 1888 was £15,932, while the present cost amounts to £41,604, which is an increase of £25,672. This increase, apart from the augmentation in the Governor's salary, is mainly in respect to the following departments:—Secretariat, Harbour Department, Constabulary and Police, and the Public Works Department. The cost of working the secretariat has been increased by £1,074, due to the following additional officers:—Two assistant colonial secretaries, a chief clerk, and a first clerk. It is well known that in 1888, when the department cost the colony about one-half its present expenses as regards the European staff, the work was performed with efficiency and despatch; while at present it is not only difficult to get business got through, but, what is more, if the business is not followed up with watchful care, it will become lost in the superabundance of assistants and clerks who crowd the department, and the practical expression of whose work is more discernible on the public revenue than anything else."[1] The *Lagos Record* goes on to say, "There is room for retrenchment in the matter of expenditure on account of the European official staff." I do not follow it here. It is room for retrenchment in mere routine workers, black and white, that is wanted, and the liberation of the Europeans to do work worth their risking their lives in West Africa for. The percentage of black officials, mainly clerks—excellent and faithful to their duties—is increasing in all our colonies there too rapidly; and the existence of poorly paid but numerous posts under Government with a certain amount of prestige, is a dangerous allurement to

[1] *Lagos Weekly Record*, August 27, 1898.

native young men, tempting them from nobler careers, and forming them into a sort of wall-class between the English official and the main body of the native population. Take, for example, the number of Government servants at the Gold Coast, according to Sir William Maxwell, 1897;—

	European officers.	Native clerks.	Hausas.	Civil police.
Accra	35	206	432	105
Cape Coast	8	69	0	47
Elmina.....	5	36	50	19

An awful percentage of clerks is 311 for such a country, more clerks than police, only 121 less Government native clerks than soldiers in the army; and you may depend upon it the white officials are clerking away, more or less, too. I always think how very apposite the answer of an official was to the criticism of excessive expenditure: "Sir, there is no reckless expenditure; every J pen has to be accounted for!"

No, I am quite unable to agree that anything but the Crown Colony system is to blame, and that because it is engaged in administering a district with no possibilities in it for England save commercial matters, in which the Crown Colony system is not well informed. I have only quoted these figures to show you that Lagos and the Gold Coast are merely keeping line with Sierra Leone—increasing their expenditure in the face of a falling trade, with a dark trade future before them, on account of French activity in cutting them off from their inland markets, and of their own mismanagement of the native races.

The trade and the prosperity of West Africa depend on jungle products. There is no more solid reason to fear the extinction of West Africa's jungle products of oil, timber,

fibre, rubber, than there is to worry about the extinction of our own coal-fields—probably not so much—for they rapidly renew themselves. Yes, even rubber, though that is slower at it than palm oil and kernel; and at present not one-tenth part of the jungle products are in touch with commerce; and save gold, and that to a very small extent, the mineral wealth of West Africa is untouched. It is not in all regions only titaniferous iron; there are silver, lead, copper, antimony, quicksilver, and tin ores there unexploited, and which it would not be advisable to attempt to exploit until the so-called labour problem is solved. This problem is really that of the co-operation for mutual benefit of the African and the Englishman. In the solution of this problem alone lies the success of England in West Africa, not of England herself, for England could survive the loss of West Africa whole, though doing so would cost her dear alike in honour and in profit. The Crown Colony system which now represents England in West Africa will never give this solution. It necessarily destroys native society, that is to say, it disorganises it, and has not in it the power to reorganise. As I have already endeavoured to show, English influence in West Africa, as represented by the Crown Colony system, consists of three separate classes of Englishmen with no common object of interest, and is not a thing capable of organising so difficult a region. All these three classes, be it granted, each represent things for the organisation of a State. No State can exist without having the governmental, the religious, and the mercantile factors, working together in it; but in West Africa these representatives of the English State are things apart and opposed to each other, and do not constitute a State. You might as

well expect to get the functions of a State, good government, out of these three disconnected classes of Englishmen in Africa, as expect to know the hour of day from the parts of a watch before they were put together.

You will see I have humbly attempted to place this affair before you from no sensational point of view, but from the commercial one—the value of West Africa to England's commerce—and have attempted to show you how this is suffering from the adherence of England to a form of government that is essentially un-English. I have made no attack on the form of government for such regions formulated in England's more intellectual though earlier period of Elizabeth, the Chartered Company system as represented by the Royal Niger Company. I have neither shares in, nor reason to attack the Royal Niger Company, which has in a few years, and during the period of the hottest French enterprise, acquired a territory in West Africa immensely greater than the territory acquired during centuries under the Crown Colony system ; it has also fought its necessary wars with energy and despatch, and no call upon Imperial resources ; it has not only paid its way, but paid its shareholders their 6 per cent., and its bitterest enemies say darkly, far more. I know from my knowledge of West Africa that this can only have been effected by its wise native policy. I know that this policy owes its wisdom and its success to one man, Sir George Taubman Goldie, a man who, had he been under the Crown Colony system, could have done no more than other men have done who have been Governors under it ; but, not being under it, the territories he won for England have not been subjected to the jerky amateur policy of those which are under the Crown Colony system. For nearly twenty years the natives

under the Royal Niger Company have had the firm, wise, sympathetic friendship of a great Englishman, who understood them, and knew them personally. It is the continuous influence of one great Englishman, unhampered by non-expert control, that has caused England's exceedingly strange success in the Niger; coupled with the identity of trade and governmental interest, and the encouragement of religion given by the constitution and administration of the Niger Company. This is a thing not given by all Chartered Companies; indeed, I think I am right in saying that the Niger and the North Borneo Companies stand alone in controlling territories that have been essentially trading during recent years. This association of trade and government is, to my mind, an *absolutely necessary restraint* on the Charter Company form of government;[1] but there is another element you must have to justify Charters, and that is that they are in the hands of an Englishman of the old type.

I am perfectly aware that the natives of Lagos and other Crown Colonies in West Africa are, and have long been, anxious for the Chartered Company of the Niger to be taken over by the Government, as they pathetically and frankly say, "so that now the trade in their own district is so bad, it may get a stimulus by a freer trade in the Niger," and the native traders not connected with the Company may rush in; while officials in the Crown Colonies have been equally anxious, as they say with frankness no less pathetic, so that they may have chances of higher appointments. I am equally aware that the merchants of England not connected with the Niger Company, which is

[1] See Introduction to *Folk Lore of the Fjort*. R. E. Dennett. David Nutt, 1898.

really an association of African merchants, desire its downfall; yet they all perfectly well know, though they do not choose to advertise the fact, that three months Crown Colony form of government in the Niger territories will bring war, far greater and more destructive than any war we have yet had in West Africa, and will end in the formation of a debt far greater than any debt we now have in West Africa, because of the greater extent of territory and the greater power of the native States, now living peacefully enough under England, but not under England as misrepresented by the Crown Colony system. I am not saying that Chartered Companies are good; I am only saying they are better than the Crown Colony plan; and that if the Crown Colony system is substituted for the Chartered Company, which is directly a trading company, England will have to pay a very heavy bill. There would be, of course, a temporary spurt in trade, but it would be a flash in the pan, and in the end, an end that would come in a few years' time, the British taxpayer would be cursing West Africa at large, and the Niger territories in particular. Personally, I entirely fail to see why England should be tied to either of these plans, the Crown Colony or the Chartered Company, for governing tropical regions. Have we quite run out of constructive ability in Statecraft? Is it not possible to formulate some new plan to mark the age of Victoria?

CHAPTER XVI

THE CLASH OF CULTURES

Wherein this student, realising as usual, when too late, that the environment of such opinions as are expressed above is boiling hot water, calls to memory the excellent saying, "As well be hung for a sheep as a lamb," and goes on.

I HAVE no intention, however, of starting a sort of open-air steam laundry for West African washing. I have only gone into the unsatisfactory-to-all-parties-concerned state of affairs there not with the hope, but with the desire, that things may be improved and further disgrace avoided. It would be no good my merely stating that, if England wishes to make her possessions there morally and commercially pay her for the loss of life that holding them entails, she must abolish her present policy of amateur experiments backed by good intentions, for you would naturally not pay the least attention to a bald statement made by merely me. So I have had to place before you the opinions of others who are more worthy of your attention. I must, however, for myself disclaim any right to be regarded as the mouthpiece of any party concerned, though Major Lugard has done me the honour to place me amongst the Liverpool merchants. I can claim no right to speak as one of them. I should be only too glad if I had this honour, but I have not. There was early this year

a distressing split between Liverpool and myself—whom I am aware they call behind my back "Our Aunt"—and I know they regard me as a vexing, if even a valued, form of relative.

This split, I may say (remembering Mr. Mark Twain's axiom, that people always like to know what a row is about), arose from my frank admiration of both the Royal Niger Company and France, neither of which Liverpool at that time regarded as worthy of even the admiration of the most insignificant; so its *Journal of Commerce* went for me. The natural sweetness of my disposition is most clearly visible to the naked eye when I am quietly having my own way, so naturally I went for its *Journal of Commerce*. Providentially no one outside saw this deplorable family row, and Mr. John Holt put a stop to it by saying to me, "Say what you like, you cannot please all of us;" had it not been for this I should not have written another line on the maladministration of West Africa beyond saying, "Call that Crown Colony system you are working there a Government! England, at your age, you ought to be ashamed of yourself!" But you see, as things are, I am not speaking for any one, only off on a little lone fight of my own against a state of affairs which I regard as a disgrace to my country.

Well but, you may say, after all what you have said points to nothing disgraceful. You have expressly said that there is no corruption in the government there, and the rest of the things—the change of policy arising from the necessity for white men to come home at the least every twelve months, the waste of money necessary to local exigencies, and the fact that officers and gentlemen cannot be expected to understand and look after what one might

call domestic expenses—may be things unavoidable and peculiar to the climate. To this I can only say, Given the climate, why do you persist in ignoring the solid mass of expert knowledge of the region that is in the hands of the mercantile party, and go on working your Governors from a non-expert base? You have in England an unused but great mass of knowledge among men of all classes who have personally dealt with West Africa—yet you do not work from that, organise it, and place it at the service of the brand new Governors who go out; far from it. I know hardly any more pathetic sight than the new official suddenly appointed to West Africa buzzing round trying to find out "what the place is really like, you know." I know personally one of the greatest of our Governors who have been down there, a man with iron determination and courage, who was not content with the information derivable from a list of requisites for a tropical climate, the shorter Hausa grammar and a nice cheery-covered little work on diseases —the usual fillets with which England binds the brows of her Sacrifices to the Coast—but went and read about West Africa, all by himself, alone in the British Museum. He was a success, but still he always declares that the only book he found about this particular part was a work by a Belgian, with a frontispiece depicting the author, on an awful river, in the act, as per inscription, of shouting, "Row on, brave men of Kru!" which, as subsequent knowledge showed him that bravery was not one of the main qualities of the Kru men, shook him up about all his British Museum education. So in the end he, like the rest, had to learn for himself, out there. Of course, if the Governors were carefully pegged down to a West African place and lived long enough, and were not by nature faddists,

doubtless they would learn, and in the course of a few years things would go well; but they are not pegged down. No sooner does one of them begin to know about the country he is in charge of than off he is whisked and deposited again, in a brand new region for which West Africa has not been a fitting introduction

Then, as for the domestic finance, why expect officers and lawyers, doctors and gentlemen from clubland to manage fiscal matters? Of course they naturally don't know about trade affairs, or whether the Public Works Department is spending money, or merely wasting it. You require professional men in West Africa, but not to do half the work they are now engaged on in connection with red tape and things they do not understand. Of course, errors of this kind may be merely Folly, you may have plenty more men as good as these to replace them with, so it may matter more to their relations than to England if they are wasted alike in life and death, and you are so rich that the gradual extinction of your tropical trade will not matter to your generation. But as a necessary consequent to this amateurism, or young gentlemen's academy system, the Crown Colony system, there is disgrace in the injustice to and disintegration of the native races it deals with.

Now when I say England is behaving badly to the African, I beg you not to think that the philanthropic party has increased. I come of a generation of Danes who when the sun went down on the Wulpensand were the men to make light enough to fight by with their Morning Stars; and who, later on, were soldiers in the Low Countries and slave owners in the West Indies, and I am proud of my ancestors; for, whatever else they were, they were not humbugs; and the generation that is round me now

seems to me in its utterances at any rate tainted with humbug. I own that I hate the humbug in England's policy towards weaker races for the sake of all the misery on white and black it brings; and I think as I see you wasting lives and money, sowing debt and difficulties all over West Africa by a hut tax war in Sierra Leone, fighting for the sake of getting a few shillings you have no right to whatsoever out of the African,—who are you that you should point your finger in scorn at my tribe? I as one of that tribe blush for you, from the basis that you are a humbug and not scientific, which, I presume you will agree is not the same thing as my being a philanthropist.

I had the honour of meeting in West Africa an English officer who had previously been doing some fighting in South Africa. He said he "didn't like being a butter-man's nigger butcher." "Oh! you're all right here then," I said; "you're out now for Exeter Hall, the plane of civilisation, the plough, and the piano." I will not report his remarks further; likely enough it was the mosquitoes that made him say things, and of course I knew with him, as I know with you, butchery of any sort is not to your liking, though war when it's wanted is; the distinction I draw between them is a hard and fast one. There is just the same difference to my mind between an unnecessary war on an unarmed race and a necessary war on the same race, as there is between killing game that you want to support yourself with or game that is destructive to your interests, and on the other hand the killing of game just to say that you have done it. This will seem a deplorably low view to take, but it is one supported by our history. We have killed down native races in Australasia and America, and it is no use slurring over the fact that we have profited

by so doing. This argument, however, cannot be used in favour of killing down the African in tropical Africa, more particularly in Western Tropical Africa. If you were to-morrow to kill every native there, what use would the country be to you? No one else but the native can work its resources: you cannot live in it and colonise it. It would therefore be only an extremely interesting place for the zoologist, geologist, mineralogist, &c., but a place of no good to any one else in England.

This view, however, of the profit derivable from and justifying war you will refuse to discuss; stating that such profit in your wars you do not seek; that they have been made for the benefit of the African himself, to free him from his native oppressors in the way of tyrannical chiefs and bloody superstitions, and to elevate him in the plane of civilisation. That this has been the intention of our West African wars up to the Sierra Leone war, which was forced on you for fiscal reasons, I have no doubt: but that any of them advanced you in your mission to elevate the African, I should hesitate to say. I beg to refer you to Dr. Freeman's opinions on the Ashantee wars on this point,[1] but for myself I should say that the blame of the failure of these wars to effect their desired end has been due to the want of power to re-organise native society after a war; for example, had the 1873 Ashantee war been followed by the taking over of Ashantee and the strong handling of it, there would not have been an 1895 Ashantee war; or, to take it the other way, if you had followed up the battle of Katamansu in 1827, you need not have had an 1874 war even. Dr. Freeman holds, that if you had let the Ashantis have a sea-port and generally behaved fairly reasonably, you

[1] *Ashantee and Jaman*, Freeman (Constable and Co., 1898).

need hardly have had Ashantee wars at all. But, however this may be, I think that a good many of the West African wars of the past ten years have been the result of the humbug of the previous sixty, during which we have proclaimed that we are only in Africa for peaceful reasons of commerce, and religion, and education, not with any desire for the African's land or property: that, of course, it is not possible for us to extend our friendship or our toleration to people who go in for cannibalism, slave-raiding, or human sacrifices, but apart from these matters we have no desire to meddle with African domestic affairs, or take away their land. This, I own, I believe to have honestly been our intention, and to be our intention still, but with our stiff Crown Colony system of representing ourselves to the African, this intention has been and will be impossible to carry out, because between the true spirit of England and the spirit of Africa it interposes a distorting medium. It is, remember, not composed of Englishmen alone, it includes educated natives, and yet it knows the true native only through interpreters.

But why call this humbug? you say. Well, the present policy in Africa makes it look so. Frankly, I do not see how you could work your original policy out unless it were in the hands of extremely expert men, patient and powerful at that. Too many times in old days have you allowed white men to be bullied, to give the African the idea that you, as a nation, meant to have your way. Too many times have you allowed them to violate parts of their treaties under your nose, until they got out of the way of thinking you would hold them to their treaties at all, and then suddenly down you came on them, not only holding them to their side of the treaties, but not holding

to your own, imposing on them restrictions and domestic interference which those treaties made no mention of at all. I have before me now copies of treaties with chiefs in the hinterland of our Crown Colonies, wherein there is not even the anti-slavery clause—treaties merely of friendship and trade, with the undertaking on the native chief's part to hand over no part or right in his territories to a foreign power without English Government consent. Yet, in the districts we hold from the natives under such treaties, we are contemplating direct taxation, which to the African means the confiscation of the property taxed. We have, in fact, by our previous policy placed ourselves to the African with whom we have made treaties, in the position of a friend. "Big friend," it is true, but not conqueror or owner. Our departure now from the "big friend" attitude into the position of owner, hurts his feelings very much; and coupled with the feeling that he cannot get at England, who used to talk so nicely to him, and whom he did his best to please, as far as local circumstances and his limited power would allow, by giving up customs she had an incomprehensible aversion to, it causes the African chief to say "God is up," by which I expect he means the Devil, and give way to war, or sickness, or distraction, or a wild, hopeless, helpless, combination of all three; and then, poor fellow, when he is only naturally suffering from the dazzles your West African policy would give to an iron post, you go about sagely referring to "a general antipathy to civilisation among the natives of West Africa," "anti-white-man's leagues," "horrible secret societies," and such like figments of your imagination; and likely enough throw in as a dash for top the statement that the chief is "a drunken slave-raider," which as the captain of the late s.s. *Sparrow* would

say, "It may be so, and again, it mayn't." Anyhow it seems to occur to you as an argument only after the war is begun, though you have known the man some years; and it has not been the ostensible reason for any West African war save those in the Niger Company's territories, which run far enough inland to touch the slave-raiding zone, and which are entirely excluded from my arguments because they have been in the hands of experts on West Africa in war-making and in war-healing.

Our past wars in West Africa, I mean all our wars prior to the hut-tax war, have been wars in order to suppress human sacrifice, to protect one tribe from the aggression of another, and to prevent the stopping of trade by middlemen tribes. These things are things worth fighting for. The necessity we have been under to fight them has largely arisen from our ancestors shirking a little firm-handedness in their generation.

There is very little doubt that, owing to a want of reconstruction after destruction, these wars have not been worth to the Empire the loss of life and money they have cost; but this is nothing against us as fighters nor any real disgrace to our honour, but merely a slur on our intellectual powers in the direction of statecraft. They are wars of a totally different character to those of the hut-tax kind, that arise from aggressions on native property: the only thing in common between them is the strain of poor statecraft. This imperfection, however, exists to a far greater extent in hut-tax war, for to it we owe that general feeling of dislike to the advance of civilisation you now hear referred to. That, to a certain extent, this dislike already exists as the necessary outcome of our policy of late years, and that it will increase yearly, I fear there is very little doubt.

It is the toxin produced by the microbe. It is the consequence of our attempt to introduce direct taxation, which seems to me to be an affair identical with your greased cartridges for India. Doubtless, such people ought not to object to greased cartridges; but, doubtless, such people as we are ought not to give them, and commit, over again, a worthless blunder, with no bad intention be it granted, but with no common sense.

It has been said that the Sierra Leone hut-tax war is "a little Indian mutiny"; those who have said it do not seem to have known how true the statement is, for these attacks on property in the form of direct taxation are, to the African, treachery on the part of England, who, from the first, has kept on assuring the African that she does not mean to take his country from him, and then, as soon as she is strong enough, in his eyes, deliberately starts doing it. When you once get between two races the feeling of treachery, the face of their relationship is altered for ever, altered in a way that no wholesome war, no brutality of individuals, can alter. Black and white men for ever after a national breach of faith tax each other with treachery, and never really trust each other again.

The African, however, must not be confounded with the Indian. Externally, in his habits he is in a lower culture state; he has no fanatical religion that really resents the incursions of other religions on his mind; Fetish can live in and among all sorts and kinds of religions without quarrelling with them in the least, grievously as they quarrel with Fetish; he has no written literature to keep before his eyes a glorious and mythical past, which, getting mixed up with his religious ideas, is liable in the Indian to make him take at times

lobster-like backward springs in the direction of that past, though it was never there, and he would not have relished it if it had been. Nevertheless, the true Negro is, I believe, by far the better man than the Asiatic; he is physically superior, and he is more like an Englishman than the Asiatic; he is a logical, practical man, with feelings that are a credit to him, and are particularly strong in the direction of property; he has a way of thinking he has rights, whether he likes to use them or no, and will fight for them when he is driven to it. Fight you for a religious idea the African will not. He is not the stuff you make martyrs out of, nor does he desire to shake off the shackles of the flesh and swoon into Nirvana; and although he will sit under a tree to any extent, provided he gets enough to eat and a little tobacco, he won't sit under trees on iron spikes, or hold a leg up all the time, or fakirise in any fashion for the benefit of his soul or yours. His make of mind is exceedingly like the make of mind of thousands of Englishmen of the stand-no-nonsense, Englishman's-house-is-his-castle type. Yet, withal, a law-abiding man, loving a live lord, holding loudly that women should be kept in their place, yet often grievously henpecked by his wives, and little better than a slave to his mother, whom he loves with a love he gives to none other. This love of his mother is so dominant a factor in his life that it must be taken into consideration in attempting to understand the true Negro. Concerning it I can do no better than give you the Reverend Leighton Wilson's words; for this great missionary knew, as probably none since have known, the true Negro, having laboured for many years amongst the most unaltered Negro tribes—the Grain coast tribes—and his words are as true to-day of

the unaltered Negro as on the day he wrote them thirty-eight years ago. And Leighton Wilson, mind you, was no blind admirer of the African.

"Whatever other estimate we may form of the African, we may not doubt his love for his mother. Her name, whether dead or alive, is always on his lips and in his heart. She is the first being he thinks of when awakening from his slumbers and the last he remembers when closing his eyes in sleep: to her he confides secrets which he would reveal to no other human being on the face of the earth. He cares for no one else in time of sickness, she alone must prepare his food, administer his medicine, perform his ablutions, and spread his mat for him. He flies to her in the hour of his distress, for he well knows if all the rest of the world turn against him she will be steadfast in her love, whether he be right or wrong.

"If there be any cause which justifies a man in using violence towards one of his fellow men it would be to resent an insult offered to his mother. More fights are occasioned among boys by hearing something said in disparagement of their mothers than all other causes put together. It is a common saying among them, if a man's mother and his wife are both on the point of being drowned, and he can save only one of them, he must save his mother, for the avowed reason if the wife is lost he may marry another, but he will never find a second mother."[1]

Among the tribes of whom Wilson is speaking above, it is the man's true mother. Among the Niger Delta tribes it is often the adopted mother, the woman who has taken him when, as a child, he has been left motherless, or, if he is a bought-in child, the woman who has taken care of him.

[1] *Western Africa*, Wilson, 1856, p. 116.

Among both, and throughout all the bushmen tribes in West Africa, however, this deep affection is the same; next to the mother comes the sister to the African, and this matter has a bearing politically.

There is little doubt that there exists a distrustful feeling towards white culture. Up to our attempt to enforce direct taxation it was only a distrustful feeling that a few years careful, honest handling would have disposed of. Since our attempt there is no doubt there is something approaching a panicky terror of white civilisation in all the native aristocracies and property owners. It is not, I repeat, to be attributed to Fetish priests. Certainly, on the whole, it is not attributable to a dislike of European customs or costumes; it is the reasonable dislike to being dispossessed alike of power and property in what they regard as their own country. A considerable factor in this matter is undoubtedly the influence of the women—the mothers of Africa. Just as your African man is the normal man, so is your African woman the normal woman. I openly own that if I have a soft spot in my feelings it is towards African women; and the close contact I have lived in with them has given rise to this, and, I venture to think, made me understand them. I know they have their faults. For one thing they are not so religiously minded as the men. I have met many African men who were philosophers, thinking in the terms of Fetish, but never a woman so doing. Be it granted that on the whole they know more about the details of Fetish procedure than the men do. Yet though frightened of them all, a blind faith in any mortal Ju Ju they do not possess. Your African lady is artful with them, not philosophic, possibly because she has other things to do—what with attending to the children,

the farm, and the market—than go mooning about as those men can. For another thing they go in for husband poisoning in a way I am unable to approve of.

Well, it may be interesting to inquire into the reasons that make the West African woman a factor against white civilisation. These reasons are—firstly, that she does not know practically anything about it; and, secondly, she has the normal feminine dislike to innovations. Missionary and other forms of white education have not been given to the African women to anything like the same extent that they have been given to the men. I do not say that there are not any African women who are not thoroughly educated in white education, for there are, and they can compare very favourably from the standpoint of their education with our normal women; but these have, I think I may safely say, been the daughters of educated African men, or have been the women who have been immediately attached to some mission station. I have no hesitation in saying that, considering the very little attention that has been given to the white education of the African women, they give evidence of an ability in due keeping with that of the African men. But all I mean to say is, that our white culture has not had a grasp over the womankind of Africa that can compare with that it has had over the men; for one woman who has been brought home to England and educated in our schools, and who has been surrounded by English culture, &c., there are 500 men. But into the possibilities of the African woman in the white education department I do not mean to go; I am getting into a snaggy channel by speaking on woman at all. It is to the mass of African women, untouched by white culture, but with an enormous influence over their sons and brothers, that I am now referring as a

factor in the dislike to the advance of white civilisation; and I have said they do not like it because, for one thing, they do not know it; that is to say, they do not know it from the inside and at its best, but only from the outside. Viewed from the outside in West Africa white civilisation, to a shrewd mind like hers, is an evil thing for her boys and girls. She sees it taking away from them the restraints of their native culture, and in all too many cases leading them into a life of dissipation, disgrace, and decay; or, if it does not do this, yet separating the men from their people.

The whole of this affair requires a whole mass of elaborate explanations to place it fairly before you, but I will merely sketch the leading points now. (1) The law of mütterrecht makes the tie between the mother and the children far closer than that between the father and them: white culture reverses this, she does not like that. (2) Between husband and wife there is no community in goods under native law; each keeps his and her separate estate. White culture says the husband shall endow his wife with all his worldly goods; this she knows usually means, that if he has any he does not endow her with them, but whether he has or has not he endows himself with hers as far as any law permits. Similarly he does not like it either. These two white culture things, saddling him with the support of the children and endowing his wife with all his property, presents a repulsive situation to the logical African. Moreover, white culture expects him to think more of his wife and children than he does of his mother and sisters, which to the uncultured African is absurd.

Then again both he and his mother see the fearful effects of white culture on the young women, who cannot be prevented in districts under white control from going down to

the coast towns and to the Devil: neither he nor the respectable old ladies of his tribe approve of this. Then again they know that the young men of their people who have thoroughly allied themselves to white culture look down on their relations in the African culture state. They call the ancestors of their tribe "polygamists," as if it were a swear-word, though they are a thousand times worse than polygamists themselves: and they are ashamed of their mothers. It is a whole seething mass of stuff all through and I would not mention it were it not that it is a factor in the formation of anti-white-culture opinion among the mass of the West Africans, and that it causes your West African bush chief to listen to the old woman whom you may see crouching behind him, or you may not see at all, but who is with him all the same, when she says, "Do not listen to the white man, it is bad for you." He knows that the interpreter talking to him for the white man may be a boughten man, paid to advertise the advantages of white ways; and he knows that the old woman, his mother, cannot be bought where his interest is concerned: so he listens to her, and she distrusts white ways.

I am aware that there is now in West Africa a handful of Africans who have mastered white culture, who know it too well to misunderstand the inner spirit of it, who are men too true to have let it cut them off in either love or sympathy from Africa,—men that, had England another system that would allow her to see them as they are, would be of greater use to her and Africa than they now are; but I will not name them: I fight a lone fight, and wish to mix no man, white or black, up in it, or my heretical opinions. That handful of African men are now fighting a hard enough fight to prevent the distracted,

uninformed Africans from rising against what looks so like white treachery, though it is only white want of knowledge; and also against those "water flies" who are neither Africans nor Europeans, but who are the curse of the Coast —the men who mislead the white man and betray the black.

Next to this there is another factor almost equally powerful, with which I presume you cannot sympathise, and which I should make a mess of if I trusted myself to explain. Therefore I call in the aid of a better writer, speaking on another race, but talking of the identical same thing. "In these days the boot of the ubiquitous white man leaves its mark on all the fair places of the earth, and scores thereon an even more gigantic track than that which affrighted Robinson Crusoe in his solitude. It crushes down the forest, beats out roads, strides across the rivers, kicks down native institutions, and generally tramples on the growths of natives and the works of primitive man, reducing all things to that dead level of conventionality which we call civilisation.

"Incidentally it stamps out much of what is best in the customs and characteristics of the native races against which it brushes; and though it relieves him of many things which hurt or oppressed him ere it came, it injures him morally almost as much as it benefits him materially. We who are white men admire our work not a little—which is natural, and many are found willing to wear out their souls in efforts to convert the thirteenth century into the nineteenth in a score of years. The natives, who for the most part are frank Vandals, also admire efforts of which they are aware that they are themselves incapable, and even the *laudator temporis acti* has his mouth stopped by the cheap and often tawdry luxury which the coming of the white man

has placed within his reach. So effectually has the heel of the white man been ground into the face of Pérak and Selangor, that these native states are now only nominally what their name implies. The white population outnumbers the people of the land in most of the principal districts, and it is possible for a European to spend weeks in either of these states without coming into contact with any Asiatics save those who wait at table, clean his shirts, or drive his cab. It is possible, I am told, for a European to spend years in Pérak or Selangor without acquiring any profound knowledge of the natives of the country or of the language which is their special medium. This being so, most of the white men who live in the protected native states are somewhat apt to disregard the effect their actions have upon the natives and labour under the common European inability to view natives from a native standpoint. Moreover, we have become accustomed to existing conditions; and thus it is that few perhaps realise the precise nature of the work which the British in the Peninsula have set themselves to accomplish. What we are really attempting, however, is nothing less than to crush into twenty years the revolution in facts and in ideas, which, even in energetic Europe, six long centuries have been needed to accomplish. No one will, of course, be found to dispute that the strides made in our knowledge of the art of government since the thirteenth century are prodigious and vast, nor that the general condition of the people of Europe has been immensely improved since that day; but nevertheless one cannot but sympathise with the Malays who are suddenly and violently translated from the point to which they have attained in the natural development of their race, and are required to live up to the standard of a people who are six centuries in

advance of them in national progress. If a plant is made to blossom or bear fruit three months before its time it is regarded as a triumph of the gardener's art; but what then are we to say of this huge moral forcing system we call 'protection'? Forced plants we know suffer in the process; and the Malay, whose proper place is amidst the conditions of the thirteenth century, is apt to become morally weak and seedy and lose something of his robust self respect when he is forced to bear Nineteenth century fruit."[1]

Now, the above represents the state of affairs caused by the clash of different culture levels in the true Negro States, as well as it does in the Malay. These two sets of men, widely different in breed, have from the many points of agreement in their State-form, evidently both arrived in our thirteenth century. The African peoples in the central East, and East, and South, except where they are true Negroes, have not arrived in the Thirteenth century, or, to put it in other words, the true Negro stem in Africa has arrived at a political state akin to that of our own Thirteenth century, whereas the Bantu stem has not; this point, however, I need not enter into here.

There are, of course, local differences between the Malay Peninsula and West Africa, but the main characteristics as regards the State-form among the natives are singularly alike. They are both what Mr. Clifford aptly likens to our own European State-form in the Thirteenth century; and the effect of the white culture on the morals of the natives is also alike. The main difference between them results from the Malay Peninsula being but a narrow strip of land and thinly peopled, compared to the densely populated section of a continent we call West Africa. Therefore,

[1] *East Coast Etchings.* H. Clifford, Singapore, 1896.

although the Malay in his native state is a superior individual warrior to the West African, yet there are not so many of him; and as he is less guarded from whites by a pestilential climate, his resistance to the white culture of the Nineteenth century is inferior to the resistance which the West African can give.

The destruction of what is good in the Thirteenth century culture level, and the fact that when the Nineteenth century has had its way the main result is seedy demoralised natives, is the thing that must make all thinking men wonder if, after all, such work is from a high moral point of view worth the Nineteenth century doing. I so often think when I hear the progress of civilisation, our duty towards the lower races, &c., talked of, as if those words were in themselves Ju Ju, of that improving fable of the kind-hearted she-elephant, who, while out walking one day, inadvertently trod upon a partridge and killed it, and observing close at hand the bird's nest full of callow fledglings, dropped a tear, and saying "I have the feelings of a mother myself," sat down upon the brood. This is precisely what England representing the Nineteenth century is doing in Thirteenth century West Africa. She destroys the guardian institution, drops a tear and sits upon the brood with motherly intentions; and pesky warm sitting she finds it, what with the nature of the brood and the surrounding climate, let alone the expense of it. And what profit she is going to get out of such proceedings there, I own I don't know. "Ah!" you say, "yes, it is sad, but it is inevitable." I do not think it is inevitable, unless you have no intellectual constructive Statecraft, and are merely in that line an automaton. If you will try Science, all the evils of the clash between the two culture periods could be avoided, and you could assist

these West Africans in their Thirteenth century state to rise into their Nineteenth century state without their having the hard fight for it that you yourself had. This would be a grand humanitarian bit of work; by doing it you would raise a monument before God to the honour of England such as no nation has ever yet raised to Him on Earth.

There is absolutely no perceivable sound reason why you should not do it if you will try Science and master the knowledge of the nature of the native and his country. The knowledge of native laws, religion, institutions, and State-form would give you the knowledge of what is good in these things, so that you might develop and encourage them; and the West African, having reached a Thirteenth century state, has institutions and laws which with a strengthening from the European hand would by their operation now stamp out the evil that exists under the native state. What you are doing now, however, is the direct contrary to this: you are destroying the good portion and thereby allowing what is evil, or imperfect, in it as in all things human, to flourish under your protection far more rankly than under the purely native Thirteenth century State-form, with Fetish as a state religion, it could possibly do.

I know, however, there is one great objection to your taking up a different line towards native races to that which you are at present following. It is one of those strange things that are in men's minds almost without their knowing they are there, yet which, nevertheless, rule them. This is the idea that those Africans are, as one party would say, steeped in sin, or, as another party would say, a lower or degraded race. While you think these things, you must act as you are acting. They really are the same idea in different clothes. They both presuppose all mankind to

have sprung from a single pair of human beings, and the condition of a race to-day therefore to be to its own credit or blame. I remember one day in Cameroons coming across a young African lady, of the age of twelve, who I knew was enjoying the advantages of white tuition at a school. So, in order to open up conversation, I asked her what she had been learning. "Ebberyting," she observed with a genial smile. I asked her then what she knew, so as to approach the subject from a different standpoint for purposes of comparison. "Ebberyting," she said. This hurt my vanity, for though I am a good deal more than twelve years of age, I am far below this state of knowledge; so I said, "Well, my dear, and if you do, you're the person I have long wished to meet, for you can tell me why you are black." "Oh yes," she said, with a perfect beam of satisfaction, "one of my pa's pa's saw dem Patriark Noah wivout his clothes." I handed over to her a crimson silk necktie that I was wearing, and slunk away, humbled by superior knowledge. This, of course, was the result of white training direct on the African mind; the story which you will often be told to account for the blackness and whiteness of men by Africans who have not been in direct touch with European, but who have been in touch with Muhammedan tradition—which in the main has the same Semitic source—is that when Cain killed Abel, he was horrified at himself, and terrified of God; and so he carried the body away from beside the altar where it lay, and carried it about for years trying to hide it, but not knowing how, growing white the while with the horror and the fear; until one day he saw a crow scratching a hole in the desert sand, and it struck him that if he made a hole in the sand and put the body in, he could hide it from God, so he did; but

all his children were white, and from Cain came the white races, while Abel's children are black, as all men were before the first murder. The present way of contemplating different races, though expressed in finer language, is practically identical with these; not only the religious view, but the view of the suburban agnostic. The religious European cannot avoid regarding the races in a different and inferior culture state to his own as more deeply steeped in sin than himself, and the suburban agnostic regards them as "degraded" or "retarded" either by environment, or microbes, or both.

I openly and honestly own I sincerely detest touching on this race question. For one thing, Science has not finished with it; for another, it belongs to a group of subjects of enormous magnitude, upon which I have no opinion, but merely feelings, and those of a nature which I am informed by superior people would barely be a credit to a cave man of the palæolithic period. My feelings classify the world's inhabitants into Englishmen, by which I mean Teutons at large, Foreigners, and Blacks. Blacks I subdivide into two classes, English Blacks and Foreign Blacks. English Blacks are Africans. Foreign Blacks are Indians, Chinese, and the rest. Of course, everything that is not Teutonic is, to put it mildly, not up to what is; and equally, of course, I feel more at home with and hold in greater esteem the English Black: a great, strong Kruman, for example, with his front teeth filed, nothing much on but oil, half a dozen wives, and half a hundred jujus, is a sort of person whom I hold higher than any other form of native, let the other form dress in silk, satin, or cashmere, and make what pretty things he pleases. This is, of course, a general view; but I am often

cornered for the detail view, whether I can reconcile my admiration for Africans with my statement that they are a different kind of human being to white men. Naturally I can, to my own satisfaction, just as I can admire an oak tree or a palm; but it is an uncommonly difficult thing to explain. All I can say is, that when I come back from a spell in Africa, the thing that makes me proud of being one of the English is not the manners or customs up here, certainly not the houses or the climate; but it is the thing embodied in a great railway engine. I once came home on a ship with an Englishman who had been in South West Africa for seven unbroken years; he was sane, and in his right mind. But no sooner did we get ashore at Liverpool, than he rushed at and threw his arms round a postman, to that official's embarrassment and surprise. Well, that is just how I feel about the first magnificent bit of machinery I come across: it is the manifestation of the superiority of my race.

In philosophic moments I call superiority difference, from a feeling that it is not mine to judge the grade in these things. Careful scientific study has enforced on me, as it has on other students, the recognition that the African mind naturally approaches all things from a spiritual point of view. Low down in culture or high up, his mind works along the line that things happen because of the action of spirit upon spirit; it is an effort for him to think in terms of matter. We think along the line that things happen from the action of matter upon matter. If it were not for the Asiatic religion we have accepted, it is, I think, doubtful whether we should not be far more materialistic in thought-form than we are. This steady sticking to the material

side of things, I think, has given our race its dominion over matter; the want of it has caused the African to be notably behind us in this, and far behind those Asiatic races who regard matter and spirit as separate in essence, a thing that is not in the mind either of the Englishman or the African. The Englishman is constrained by circumstances to perceive the existence of an extra material world. The African regards spirit and matter as undivided in kind, matter being only the extreme low form of spirit. There must be in the facts of the case behind things, something to account for the high perception of justice you will find in the African, combined with an inability to think out a pulley or a lever except under white tuition. Similarly, taking the true Negro States, which are in its equivalent to our Thirteenth century, it accounts for the higher level of morals in them than you would find in our Thirteenth century; and I fancy this want of interest and inferiority in materialism in the true Negro constitutes a reason why they will not come into our Nineteenth century, but, under proper guidance could attain to a Nineteenth century state of their own, which would show a proportionate advance. The simile of the influence of the culture of Rome, or rather let us say the culture of Greece spread by the force of Rome, upon Barbarian culture is one often used to justify the hope that English culture will have a similar effect on the African. This I do not think is so. It is true the culture of Rome lifted the barbarians from what one might call culture 9 to culture 17, but the Romans and the barbarians were both white races. But you see now a similar lift in culture in Africa by the influence of Mohammedan culture, for example in the Hausa States and again in the Western Soudan, where there is no fundamental race difference.

In both English and Mohammedan Berber influence on the African there is another factor, apart from race difference; namely, that the two higher cultures are in a healthier state than that of Rome was at the time it mastered the barbarian mind; in both cases the higher culture has the superior war force.

This seems to me simply to lay upon us English for the sake of our honour that we keep clean hands and a cool head, and be careful of Justice; to do this we must know what there is we wish to wipe out of the African, and what there is we wish to put in, and so we must not content ourselves by relying materially on our superior wealth and power, and morally on catch phrases. All we need look to is justice. Love for our fellow-man, pity, charity, mercy, we need not bother our heads about, so long as we are just. These things are of value only when they are used as means whereby we can attain justice. It is no use saying that it matters to a Teuton whether the other race he deals with is black, white, yellow—I can quite conceive that we should look down on a pea-green form of humanity if we had the chance. Naturally, I think this shows a very proper spirit. I should be the last to alter any of our Teutonic institutions to please any race; but when it comes to altering the institutions of another race, not for the reason even of pleasing ourselves but merely on the plea that we don't understand them, we are on different ground. If those ideas and institutions stand in the way of our universal right to go anywhere we choose and live as honest gentlemen, we have the power-right to alter them; but if they do not we must judge them from as near a standard of pure Justice as we can attain to.

There are many who hold murder the most awful crime

a man can commit, saying that thereby he destroys the image of his Maker; I hold that one of the most awful crimes one nation can commit on another is destroying the image of Justice, which in an institution is represented more truly to the people by whom the institution has been developed, than in any alien institution of Justice; it is a thing adapted to its environment. This form of murder by a nation I see being done in the destruction of what is good in the laws and institutions of native races. In some parts of the world, this murder, judged from certain reasonable standpoints, gives you an advantage; in West Africa, judged from any standpoint you choose to take, it gives you no advantage. By destroying native institutions there, you merely lower the moral of the African race, stop trade, and the culture advantages it brings both to England and West Africa. I again refer you to the object lesson before you now, the hut tax war in Sierra Leone. Awful accusations have been made against the officers and men who had the collecting of this tax. In the matter of the native soldiery, there is no doubt these accusations are only too well founded, but the root thing was the murder of institutions. The worst of the whole of this miserable affair is that a precisely similar miserable affair may occur at any time in any of our West African Crown Colonies—to-morrow, any day,—until you choose to remove the Crown Colony system of government.

It has naturally been exceedingly hard for men who know the colony and the natives, with the experience of years in an unsentimental commercial way, to keep civil tongues in their heads while their interests were being wrecked by the action of the government; but whether or no the white officers were or were not brutal in their

methods we must presume will be shown by Sir David Chalmers's report. I am unable to believe they were. But there is no manner of doubt that outrages have been committed, disgraceful to England, by the set of riff-raff rascal Blacks, who had been turned out by, or who had run away from, the hinterland tribes down into Sierra Leone Colony, and there been turned, by an ill-informed government, into police, and sent back with power into the very districts from which they had, shortly before, fled for their crimes. I entirely sympathise, therefore, with the rage of Liverpool and Manchester, and of every clear-minded common-sense Englishman who knows what a thing the hut tax war has been. And I want common-sense Englishmen to recognise that a system capable of such folly, and under which such a thing could happen in an English possession, is a system that must go. For a system that gets short of money, from its own want of business-like ability, and then against all expert advice goes and does the most unscientific thing conceivable under the circumstances, to get more, is a thing that is a disgrace to England. Yet the Sierra Leone Colony was capable of this folly, and the people in London were capable of saying to Liverpool and Manchester, that no difficulty was expected from the collection of the tax. If this is so in our oldest colony, what reason have we to believe that in the others we are safer? Any of them, in combination with London, may to-morrow go and do the most unscientific thing conceivable, and disgrace England, in order to procure more local revenue, and fail at that.

The desire to develop our West African possessions is a worthy one in its way, but better leave it totally alone than attempt it with your present machinery; which the

moment it is called upon to deal with the administration of the mass of the native inhabitants gives such a trouble. And remember it is not the only trouble your Crown colony system can give; it has a few glorious opportunities left of further supporting everything I have said about it, and more. But I will say no more. You have got a grand rich region there, populated by an uncommon fine sort of human being. You have been trying your present set of ideas on it for over 400 years; they have failed in a heart-breaking drizzling sort of way to perform any single solitary one of the things you say you want done there. West Africa to-day is just a quarry of paving-stones for Hell, and those stones were cemented in place with men's blood mixed with wasted gold.

Prove it! you say. Prove it to yourself by going there—I don't mean to Blazes—but to West Africa.

CHAPTER XVII

AN ALTERNATIVE PLAN

Wherein the student, having said divers harsh things of those who destroy but do not reconstruct, recognises that, having attempted destruction, it is but seemly to set forth some other way whereby the West African colonies could be managed.

WEST AFRICA, I own, is a make of country difficult for a power with a different kind of culture, climate and set of institutions, and so on, to manage from Europe satisfactorily. But, as things go, I venture to think it presents no especial difficulty; that all the difficulties that exist in this matter are difficulties arising from misunderstandings,—things removable, not things of essence, barring only fever.

Also I feel convinced that no one of our English governmental methods at present existing is suitable for its administration. It is no use saying, Look at our Indian system, why not just introduce that into West Africa? I have the greatest admiration for our Indian system; it is the right thing in the right place, thanks to its having healthily grown up, fostered by experts, military and civil. Nevertheless it would not do for West Africa to-day. What we want there is the sowing of a similar system, not the transplanting of the Indian in its perfect form, for that is to-day for West Africa infinitely too expensive. If a

man before his fortune is made spends a fortune, he ends badly; if he measures his expenditure with his income and develops his opportunities, he ends as a millionaire; and we must never forget that great dictum that the State is the perfection of the individual man, and should mould our politics accordingly.

I hold it to be a sound and healthy idea of ours that our possessions over-sea should pay their own way, and I therefore distrust the cucumber-frame form of financial politics that at present holds the field in West African affairs. It has been the pride and boast of the West African colonies that they have paid their way; let it remain so. It seems to me unsound that our colonies there should receive loans wherewith to carry on; for, for one thing, it makes them carry on more than is good for them, and merely means a piling up of debt; and, for another, it gives West Africa the notion that it is England's business to support her, which to my mind it distinctly is not; for if we wanted a lapdog set of colonies we could get healthier ones elsewhere. Moreover, it pauperises instead of fostering the proper pride, without which nothing can flourish.

Apart from our Indian system, we have, for governing those regions where our race cannot locally produce a sufficient population of its own to take the reins of government out of the hands of officialdom in England, only two other systems, namely, the Chartered Company and the Crown Colony. I beg to urge that it is high time we had a third system. Concerning the Crown Colony system for Africa, I have spoken as tolerantly as I believe it is possible for any one acquainted with its working in West Africa to speak. If I were to say any more I might say something

uncivil, which, of course, I do not wish to do. Concerning the Chartered Company system, I need only remark that there are two distinct breeds of Chartered Companies—the one whose attention is turned to the trade, the other whose attention is turned to the lands over which its charter gives it dominion. The first kind is represented in Africa by the Royal Niger Company, the second by the South African.

The second form of Chartered Company, that interested in land, we have not in West Africa under the name of a Company; but the present Crown Colony system represents it, and I feel certain that whatever good the South African Company may have done for the empire in South Africa, it has done an immense amount of harm in Western Africa. For some, to me unknown, reason the South African Company has found favour in the sight of officialdom in London; and, fascinated by its success in South Africa, yet recognising its drawbacks, officialdom has attempted to introduce what they regard as best in the South African system into West Africa. I do not think any student can avoid coming to the conclusion that the policy which is now driving the Crown Colonies in West Africa is one and the same with that of Mr. Rhodes. I do not mean that Mr. Rhodes, had he had the handling of West Africa, would himself have used this form of policy. He formulated it for South Africa; but, with his careful study of such things as local needs, he would have formulated another form for West Africa, which is a totally different region.

To take only two of the differences, and state them brutally. First, in West Africa the most valuable asset you have is the native: the more heavily the district there is populated with Africans, and the more prosperous those

natives are, the better for you; for it means more trade. All the gold, ivory, oil, rubber, and timber in West Africa are useless to you without the African to work them; you can get no other race that can replace him, and work them; the thing has now been tried, and it has failed. Whereas in South Africa the converse is true: you can do without the African there, you can replace him with pretty nearly any other kind of man you like, or do the work yourself. The second difference is, that the land in South Africa is worth your having, you can go and domesticate on it; whereas in West Africa you cannot. A failure to recognise these differences is at the root of our present ill-judged West African policy, outside the Royal Niger Company's domain; by introducing South African methods we are trying to get what is of no use to us, the *Landes Hoheit*, and thereby devastating what is of use to us, the trade.

However, I will not detain you over this interesting question of Chartered Company government. I merely wish to draw your attention to the two breeds, the Land Company, and the Trade Company; and to urge that they are things to be applied in their respective proper environments. I can honestly assure you, I know every blessed, single, mortal thing that can be said against the trade form which I admire, for I have lived under a hail of this sort of information since I was discovered by my big juju, Liverpool, to be such an admirer of what I called a co-ordinate system of government and trade, and Liverpool called divers things.

I shall go to my grave believing that Liverpool had reasons for attacking the Company, but neglected fundamental facts in its controversy with the Trade Company, which, to it, was "a little more than kith, and less than kind."

The Royal Niger Company has demonstrated its adaptation to its environment. Without any forced labour, without any direct taxation, it has paid. I venture to think, though I have no doubt it would severely hurt the feelings of the R.N.C., that we may regard the Royal Niger Company as representing the perfected system of native government in West Africa plus English courage and activity. I believe that on this foundation has been built its success. For say what you like, if the Royal Niger had not got on well with the natives in its territories—dealt cleanly, honestly, rationally with them—it would never have extended its influence in the grand way it has, represented only by a mere handful of white men, in what is, as far as we know, the most densely populated region with the highest and most organised form of native power in all tropical Africa. Had it not been to the natives it ruled a just, honourable, and desirable form of government, it would long ago have been stamped out by them, or would have been compelled to call in England's armed support to maintain it as the Crown Colony system has been compelled to do in Sierra Leone and on the Gold Coast. It has not had to call in Imperial assistance, and it has paid its shareholders—a sound, healthy conduct; but, nevertheless, remember that all the great debt of gratitude you and every one of the English owe the Royal Niger Company for defending the honour of England against Continental enterprise, for maintaining the honour of England in the eyes of the native races with whom it had made treaties, you do not owe to the Chartered Company *system*, but to Sir George Goldie, the man who had to use it because it was the best existing system available for such a region. You have not much sense to give all the honour to Lord Kitchener of

Khartoum's sword, though a sword is an excellent thing. I trust, therefore, you have too much sense to give all honour to the Chartered Company, even when it is a trading company. Trade is an excellent thing, but, in the case of the Royal Niger, this very factor, trade, restricts the man who uses the Chartered Company to a set of white men and a set of black. Therefore, never can I feel that either Liverpool or the Brass men have profited by the R.N.C. as they would have done if there had been a better system available for dealing with what Mr. St. Loe Strachey delicately calls "a dark-skinned population" with an insufficient local white population at hand. Briefly, I should say that the Chartered Company system keeps its "ain fish-guts for its ain sea-maws" too much. Therefore now, when, like many before me who have laboured strenuously to reform, I have given up the idea that reformation is possible for the individual on whom they have expended their powers, and have decided that there are some people whom you can only reform with a gun, I will start reforming myself, and say the Chartered Company system is not good enough, taken all round as things are, for West Africa for these reasons.

First, a Chartered Company consists of a band of merchants, ruling through, and by, a great man. If that great man who expands the influence and power of the Company lives long enough to establish a form of policy, well and good. I have sufficient trust in the common sense of a band of English merchants, provided their interest is common, to believe they will adhere to the policy; but suppose he does not, or suppose you do not start with a good man, you will merely have a mess, as has been demonstrated by the perpetual failures of our French

friends' Chartered Companies. By the way, I may remark that although France is no great admirer of the chartered system with us, she is devoted to it for herself, sprinkling all her West African possessions with them freely, only unfortunately, as their names are usually far longer than their banking accounts, they do not grow conspicuous; even apart from these private and subsidised Chartered Companies in French possessions, France follows the chartered system imperially in West Africa by keeping out non-French trade with differential tariffs, and so on. But, after all, in this matter she is no worse than English critics of the Royal Niger; and it is a common trait of all West African palavers that those who criticise are amply well provided themselves with the very faults they find so repulsive in others—it's the climate.

Secondly, the Chartered Company represents English trade interests in sections, instead of completely; English honour, common sense, military ability, and so on, the Royal Niger under Sir George Goldie has represented more perfectly than these things have ever been represented in West—or, I may safely say, Africa at large; but the trade interests of England it has only represented partially, or in other words, it has only represented the trade interests of its shareholders and the natives it has made treaties with, and what we want is something that will represent our trade interests there completely. Therefore, I do not advocate it as the general system for West Africa, for under another sort of man it might mean merely a more rapid crash than we are in for with the Crown Colony system. To my dying day I shall honour that great Trade Company, the Royal Niger, for representing England, that is, England properly so-called, to the world at large, during

one of the darkest ages we have ever had since Charles II.; and, I believe that it, with the Committee of Merchants who held the Gold Coast for England after the battle of Katamansu, when her officials would have abandoned alike the Gold Coast and her honour in West Africa, will stand out in our history as grand things, but yet I say we want another system.

"Du binst der Geist der stets verneint!" you ejaculate. You do not like Crown Colonies. You won't grovel to Chartered Companies, however good. You prove, on your own showing, that there is not in West Africa a sufficiently large, or a sufficiently long resident, local English population —what with their constantly leaving for home or for the cemetery—to form an independent colony. What else remains?

Well, I humbly beg to say that there is another system—a system that pays in all round peace and prosperity—a system whereby a region with a native population—a lively one in a Thirteenth century culture state—of about 30,000,000, is ruled. The total value of exports from the regions I refer to averages £14,000,000, out of a country of very much the same make as West Africa; the floating capital in its trade is some £25,000,000; its actual land area is 562,540 square miles; yet its trade with its European country amounts, nevertheless, to at least one half of that carried on between India and England. If you apply the system that has built this thing up, practically since 1830, to West Africa, you will not get the above figures out in forty years; but you will get at least two-thirds of them; and that would be a grand rise on your present West African figures, and in time you could surpass these figures, for West Africa is far larger, and far nearer European markets, and you have the advantage of superior shipping.

The region I am citing is not so unhealthy for whites as West Africa. Still, it has a stiff death-rate of its own; even nowadays, when it has pulled that death-rate down by Science—a thing, I may remark, you never trouble your head about in West Africa, or think worthy of your serious attention.

I will not insult your knowledge by telling you where this system is working to-day, or who works it, and all that. The same consideration also bars me from applying for a patent for this system; for although I lay it before you altered to what I think suitable for West Africa, the main lines of the system remain. The only thing I confess that makes me shaky about its being applied to West Africa is, that this system requires and must have experts black and white to work it, both at home in England and out in West Africa. Still, you have a sufficient supply of such experts, if only you would not leave things so largely in the hands of clerks and amateurs; who, with the assistance of faddists and renegade Africans, break up the native true Negro culture state, leaving you little sound stuff to work on in the regions now under the Crown Colony system.

Before I proceed to sketch the skeleton of the other system, I must lay before you briefly the present political state of West Africa in the words of the greatest living expert on the subject, as they are given in a remarkable article in the *Edinburgh Review* for October, 1898.

"The weighty utterance of Sir George Goldie should never be forgotten, 'Central African races and tribes have, broadly speaking, no sentiment of patriotism as understood in Europe.' There is, therefore, little difficulty in inducing them to accept what German jurisconsults term 'Ober

Hoheit,' which corresponds with our interpretation of our vague term 'Protectorate.' But when complete sovereignty or 'Landes Hoheit,' is conceded, they invariably stipulate that their local customs and systems of government shall be respected. On this point they are, perhaps, more tenacious than most subject races with whom the British Empire has had to deal; while their views and ideas of life are extremely difficult for an Englishman to understand. It is therefore certain that even an imperfect and tyrannical native African administration, if its extreme excesses were controlled by European supervision, would be in the early stages productive of far less discomfort to its subjects than well-intentioned but ill-directed efforts of European magistrates, often young and headstrong, and not invariably gifted with sympathy and introspective powers. If the welfare of the native races is to be considered, if dangerous revolts are to be obviated, the general policy of ruling on African principles through native rulers must be followed for the present. Yet it is desirable that considerable districts in suitable localities should be administered on European principles by European officials, partly to serve as types to which the native governments may gradually approximate, but principally as cities of refuge in which individuals of more advanced views may find a living if native government presses unduly upon them, just as in Europe of the Middle Ages men whose love of freedom found the iron-bound system of feudalism intolerable, sought eagerly the comparative liberty of cities."[1]

There are a good many points in the above classic passage on which I would fain become diffuse, but I

[1] Preface by Sir George Goldie to Vandeleur's *Campaigning on the Upper Nile and Niger*, 1898.

forbear; merely begging you to note carefully the wording of that part concerning government by natives ruling on African principles, because here is a pitfall for the hasty. You will be told that this is the present policy in Crown Colonies—but it is not. What they are doing is ruling on European principles through natives, which is a horse of another colour entirely and makes it hot work for the unfortunate native catspaw chief, and so all round unsatisfactory that no really self-respecting native chief will take it on.

Well, to return to that other system: what it has got to do is to unite English interests—administrative, commercial and educational—into one solid whole, and combine these with native interests; briefly, to be a system where the Englishman and the African co-operate together for their mutual benefit and advancement, and therefore it must be a representative system, and one of those groups of representative systems which form the British Empire.

For reasons I need not discuss here it must be a duplicate system, with an English and an African side, these two united and responsible to the English Crown, but both having as great a share of individual freedom in Africa as possible. By and by the necessity for the duplicate system may disappear, but at present it is necessary.

I will take the English side first. There should be in England an African Council, in whose hands is the power of voting supplies and of appointing the Governor-General, subject to the approval of the Crown, and to whom firms trading in Africa should be answerable for the actions of their representatives. This council should be of nominated members, from the Chambers of Commerce of Liverpool, Manchester, London, Bristol, and Glasgow. Of course,

they should not be paid members. This council would occupy a similar position in West African administration to that which the House of Commons occupies in English.

Under this Grand Council there should be two sub-councils reporting to it, one a joint committee of English lawyers and medical men, the other a committee of the native chiefs. Neither of these councils should be paid, but sufficient should be granted them to pay their working expenses. The members of these sub-councils of the Grand Council should be appointed—the medical and legal committee by say, the Lord Chancellor and the College of Physicians respectively, and the committee of African chiefs by the chiefs in West Africa.

I make no pretence at believing that either of these sub-councils for the first few years of their existence will be dove-cots—lawyers and doctors will always fight each other: but the lawyers will hold the doctors in and *vice versa*, and the common sense of the Grand Council will hold them both well down to practical politics. With the council of chiefs there will probably be less trouble, and this council will be an ambassador to the white government at headquarters capable of representing to it native opinion and native requirements.

Representing the Grand Council and nominated by it, subject to the approval of the Crown, as represented by the Chief Secretary for the Colonies and the Privy Council, there must be one Governor-General for West Africa: he must be supreme commander of the land and sea forces, with the right of declaring peace and war, and concluding treaties with the native chiefs; he must be a proved expert in West African affairs; he must be paid, say, £5,000 a year; he must spend six months on the Coast on a tour

of inspection, during which he must be accessible alike to the European and native. He may, if he sees fit, spend more than six months out there; but it is not advisable he should reside there permanently, for if he does so, he will assuredly get out of touch with the Grand Council, of which he should *ex officio* be chairman or president. This grand council with its sub-councils is all that is required in England for the government of West Africa. It is not, as you see, an expensive system *per se*: with its power to raise supplies, it could vote itself sufficient to carry on its out-of-pocket expenses in the matter of clerks and goods inspectors. The connecting link between it and Africa is the Governor-General; between it and England, the Chief Secretary for the Colonies—not the Colonial, or Foreign, or any other existing Office: things it should be equal with, not subject to.

Out in Africa, the Governor-General should be the representative of the English *raj*—the Ober Hoheit of England—and the head of the system of Landes Hoheit, represented by the African chiefs; in him the two must join. Under his control, on the European side, must be the few European officials required to administer the country locally. These must be carefully picked, experienced men, provided with sufficient power to enforce their rule with promptitude when it comes to details; but the policy of the Ober Hoheit should be the policy of the Governor and Grand Council, not of the individual official.

Immediately in grade under the Governor-General should come a set of district commissioners or governors, one for each of the present colonies. These men should be the resident representatives of the Governor-General, and responsible to him for the affairs, trade and political, of

their districts. These district commissioners should be paid £2,000 a year each, and have a term of residence on the Coast of twelve months, with six months' furlough at home on half pay, the other half of the pay going to the men who represent them during their absence at home—the senior sub-commissioners of their districts.[1]

The next grade are the sub-commissioners. These are only required in the districts now termed Protectorates; the Europeanised coast towns to be under a different system I will sketch later. Well, these Protectorate districts should be divided up among sub-commissioners, who should each reside in his allotted district. They should be responsible directly to the district commissioner, and they should represent to him constantly the chiefs' council of the sub-district and the trade, and on the other hand represent trade and the OberHoheit things to the native chiefs. These men, therefore, will be the backbone of the system, and primarily on them will depend its success; so they must be expert men—well acquainted with the native culture state, and with the trade. Each of these sub-commissioners should have

[1] The time which a man ought to be expected to remain in West Africa is difficult to determine—representatives of trading firms are expected to remain out two years, and the mortality among them is certainly no higher than among the officials with their twelve months' service. It is contended by the commercial party that it takes a man several months after returning from furlough to get into working order again, that under the twelve months' system no sooner has he done this than he is off on furlough again, in short that the system is foolish and wasteful in the extreme. On the other hand the advocates of the short service plan contend that a man is not fit for work at all after twelve months in West Africa, and that if he is not definitely ill, he has at any rate lost all energy. Personally, I fancy it depends on the individual, and that with a definite policy the short service plan will be quite safe.

in his district, his own town, from which he should frequently make tours of inspection round his district at large; but this town should be what Sir George Goldie calls "a town of refuge." English law should rule in it absolutely, administered by an official, one of the class of men approved by the legal sub-council of the Grand Council. The sub-commissioner should also have in his town a medical staff of three men, nominated by the medical side of the sub-council of the Grand Council. These three (chief medical, assistant medical, and dispenser) should have a hospital provided, where they can carry on their work properly. Also in this town should be the military force sufficient to enforce rule in the district—either to go and prevent one chief bagging another chief's belongings, or to assist a chief in a domestic crisis. It is impossible to say how large a military staff a sub-commissioner would require; some districts would require no more than fifty soldiers, while another might require 200. Details of this kind the Governor-General must decide; but whatever size this force may be, it should be composed of troops under efficient military control. I believe the West Indian troops to be the best for this service; but here again you will meet, if you take the trouble to inquire of people who ought to know, the greatest haziness of mind combined with an enormous difference of opinion. Some will tell you that the West Indians are no good, that they are cowardly and unfit for bush work, and require as many carriers as a white regiment. Others say the opposite, and hold forth on the evil of using raw savages as troops in such a country, and placing men who have been cast out on account of crime into positions of power and authority in the very districts wherein all the

power they should have by rights would be to swing at the end of a rope.

There is much to be said on both sides; the only thing I will say is that military affairs in West Africa are in much the same scrappy mess as civil, and require reorganisation. There is, no doubt, excellent fighting material in many West African tribes, and turbulent native spirits are all the better for military organisation and discipline; it is certain, however, that such men should be deported from districts wherein they have private scores to settle, and used elsewhere after they have been disciplined. If it were possible for the native regiments now being drilled in the hinterlands of our colonies out there to be used actively to guard our people from foreign aggression, there would be a good reason for having them, but recent events have demonstrated, in the Gold Coast hinterland for example, that they cannot, according to Government notions, be so employed. Therefore they are worse than useless, for they merely add to the unjustifiable aggressions on the native residents by aggressions of their own; such things as native police under the white Government side for the districts of the protectorate should not exist. They are a sort of wild fowl who will get you and themselves into more rows than they will ever get any one out of, and they will squeeze you and the native population into the bargain. The chiefs of the district should be responsible for the internal administration of justice among their own people. If a chief fails in this he should be removed, with the assistance of the military force at the command of the sub-commissioner. When, in fact, a chief is found to be going astray, the fact should be promptly brought before the council of chiefs; a definite short time, say a month,

should be allowed them to bring him to his bearings, and if at the expiration of this time they fail to do so, without any further delay the sub-commissioner should step in. In a very short time the chiefs' council would see the advisability of keeping this from happening, and also see that it can only be prevented by enforcing good government among themselves.

Well, this West Indian guard should of course be under its proper military officers, and at the disposal of the sub-commissioner, and well installed in barracks, and made generally as happy as circumstances will permit.

Then again in each town which forms the centre of a sub-commissioner's district there should be representatives of any firms who may wish to trade there. They can each have their separate factories, or form a local association for working the trade of the district as it pleases them. I think it would be advisable that in each of these towns away in the interior there should be a warehouse, whereto all goods coming up for the separate trading firms should be delivered, and wherein all exports ready for transport to the coast should be lodged, and the figures concerning these things ascertained. This should be the business of the sub-commissioner's secretary, and he can be aided in it by a black clerk. But it would not be a custom-house, because customs, like native regiments, do not exist out there under this system.

If any of the firms like to establish sub-factories in the district outside the town, they should have every facility impartially afforded them to do so. Any attack made on them by the natives should be promptly revenged, but outside the town in all trade matters the native law should rule under the administration of the local chief,

with a power (in important cases—say, over £20 involved) of appeal to the chiefs' council, and from that, if need be to the sub-commissioner.

Now in this town, acting with and directing the council of chiefs, you will have all that the hinterland districts in West Africa at present require for their administration and development, except, you will say, religion and education. As for the first, as represented by the missions, I think they will do best away from the rest, as I will presently attempt to explain. As for education, that will be in their hands too, and with them. The missionary stations about the district, however, will be under the direct control and protection of the sub-commissioner and his town. No gaol will be required there or elsewhere in West Africa; the sort of thing a gaol represents is better represented by a halter and convict labour gang. So much, as old Peter Heylin would say, for the sub-commission.

The district commissioner for a colony and its hinterland should have a residence at one of the chief towns on the coast, making tours round to his sub-commissioners as occasion requires; and he should always be accessible both to his sub-commissioners and to the district chiefs. At his head town should be the headquarters of the military force required by his colony, and the headquarters of the labour service.

We will now turn to the administration of the coast towns, places that have been long in our possession and have a sufficient white and Europeanised African population to justify us in regarding them as English possessions in the Landes Hoheit sense. These towns should be governed by municipality, and should be under English law, having accredited magistrates approved of by the Grand Council

and paid, not by the municipalities, but by the Grand Council.

Each municipality should occupy in the system an identical position to that occupied by the sub-commissioner in his town, and communicate with the district commissioner direct, receive all goods, and make returns of them to him. They should each have and be responsible for hospitals and schools within the town, and for its police, lighting, and sanitary affairs. Each municipality should be paid by the Government the same pay as a sub-commissioner, £1,000 a year. They should get their extra resources from a charge on the trade of the town at a fixed rate made by the Grand Council for all municipalities under the system.

This system would do away with the division of our possessions, at present so misleading and vexatious and unnecessary, into Colonies and Protectorates, and substitute for that division the just division into regions under our Landes Ober Hoheit (municipalities), and those under our Ober Hoheit—(sub-commissioners' districts). Both alike would be under the Governor-General as representing the Grand Council.

There still remains one important new development in our West African methods—the organisation of native labour. The institution of a regular and reliable labour supply seems to me one of the most vital things for the progress of West Africa. There is undoubtedly in West Africa an enormous supply of labour, and that the true negro can work and work well the Krumen have amply demonstrated. All that is required is method and organisation. This you could easily supply. If, for example, you were to direct those energies of yours which are now employed in raising native regiments in the hinterland to raising

and regulating a native labour army, it would be better. A native regiment of soldiers is a thing you do not want in any hinterland district, whereas the native regiment of labourers is a thing you do want very badly.

There is also in this connection another fact: while, under the present state of affairs, one colony will be choked with men anxious for work, and another colony will be starving for labour, if all the English colonies were united under one system, and a regular labour department were instituted, this would be obviated.

There exist in West Africa two sources of labour supply, but I think the Labour Department had better deal with only one of them—the free paid labour—the other, the convict, would be better placed under the kind care of the municipalities.

All persons convicted of offences other than capital, should be, at the discretion of the magistrates, sentenced to a fine, or so many weeks' labour. The whole of this labour should be devoted to the Public Works Department of the Municipality, not of the State, and above all, should not be sent away up into the hinterland, where there will be no one to look after it as convict labour requires. Quite apart from this, there should be the State Labour Department, whose jurisdiction would extend over both colony and hinterland, and whose white officials should be a distinct line in the service; one or more of these officials should be in every hinterland sub-commissioner's town. They would be recruiters and drillers of labourers, just as you now have recruiters and drillers of soldiers there; and a requisition should be made to all the chiefs, to draft into this labour army any person, under their rule, who might be anxious to serve as a labourer; and they

should also have power to enrol any labour volunteer recruits that might come into the town, provided the chiefs could not show a satisfactory reason against their so doing. This labour army should be divided up into suitably sized gangs, with a head man elected by his gang, and be employed in the transport work required by the Government, or let out by the Government to private individuals requiring labour within the district, or drafted to other English colonies on the Coast, if occasion required, to do certain jobs—I do not say for certain spaces of time, because piecework is the best system for West Africa. An attempt should be made gradually to induce the hinterland chiefs to adopt the Kru social system, wherein every man serves so many years as a labourer, then, about the age of thirty, joins the army and becomes a compound soldier-policeman, ending up in honour and glory as a local magistrate. But it must be remembered that domestic slavery is not a great institution among the Kru tribes, as it is amongst the hinterland tribes in our colonies; the Kru system could not, therefore, be immediately introduced.

We now come to the question of where the revenue is to come from to support this system. There is no difficulty about that in itself; the difficulty comes in in the method to be employed in its collection. When one has a chartered trading company it is, of course, a simple matter; when you have a Crown Colony it is done by means of the custom-house system. The alternative system, however, is not a chartered company; under it individual firms, so long as they can show sufficient capital and good faith, would work the details of their trade out there as freely and privately as in England. I think every effort should be made to do away in West Africa with the custom-house system as it

exists in English Crown Colonies. In Cameroon it is better, but in our Crown Colonies and also in the Niger Coast Protectorate it is ruinous to the tempers of ship masters and shippers, and the cause of a great waste of time—decidedly one of the main causes of the undue length of voyages to and from the Coast.

It seems to me that the revenue of our West African possessions must be a charge on the trade; and that this charge should, as much as possible, be collected in Europe from the shippers instead of from their representatives on the Coast. If I were king in Babylon, I would make all the trade to West Africa pass through Liverpool, and pay its customs there to a custom-house of the Grand Council, or through the English ports of the other chambers represented on the Grand Council —each chamber being responsible for the trade of its port. I am aware that this would cause difficulty with the increasing continental trade; but this would be obviated by affiliating Hamburg and Havre to the Council and giving into their hands the collections of the dues at those ports. The Grand Council should fix annually the amount of the trade tax, and it should have at its disposal for this matter the figures sent home by the separate district commissioners in West Africa. The sub-commissioner of a district should know the amount of trade his district was doing, and be paid a commission on it to stimulate his interest. If the goods used in his district were delivered at one warehouse in his town, he would have little difficulty in getting the figures, which he should pass on to the district commissioner, who should forward them to the Grand Council with report in duplicate to the Governor-General, so that that officer might keep his finger on the

pulse of the prosperity of each district; similarly, the municipalities should report to him the trade done in the towns under their control.

In addition, the Government, that is to say, the Grand Council, should take over the monopoly of the tobacco import and the timber export. By using tobacco in the same way as European governments use coinage, an immense revenue could be very cheaply obtained. The Grand Council should sell the tobacco to the individual traders who work the West African markets, allowing no other tobacco to be used in the trade; this revenue also could be collected in Europe.

The timber industry should, I think, be under governmental control, both for the sake of providing the Government with revenue and for the sake of protecting the forests from destruction in those districts where forest destruction is a danger to the common weal, by weakening the forest barriers against the Sahara.

The return that the Government should make for these monopolies to the independent trader should be, among other things, transport. In the course of a few years the Government would have in hand a sufficient surplus to build a pier across the Gold Coast surf. It is possible to build piers across the West Coast surf, for the French have done it. I would not advocate one great and mighty pier, that ocean-going steamers could go alongside, for all the Gold Coast ports, but a set of T-headed piers where surf boats or lighters could discharge, and the employment of stout steam tugs to tow surf boats and lighters to and fro between the lighters and the pier.

Then again, every mile of available waterway inland should be utilised, and patrolled by Government cargo

boats of the lawn-mower or flat-iron brand, as the Chargeurs-Reunis are subsidised to patrol the Ogowé. On the Gold Coast you have the Volta and the Ancobra available for this; in Sierra Leone and Lagos you have many waterways penetrating inland.

Land transport should also be in the hands of the Government, and goods delivered free of extra charge at the towns of the sub-commissioners; this could be done by the Labour Department. When sufficient surplus revenue was in hand, light railways on the French system should be built, similarly delivering, free of freight, the goods belonging to the inland registered traders, but charging freight for passengers and local goods traffic. A telegraph and postal service should also be another source of revenue, if thrown open at a low charge to the general public. If there is a telegraph office in West Africa, where telegrams can be sent at a reasonable rate, the general public will throw away a lot of money on it in a fiscally fascinating way.

These various sources of revenue will place in the hands of the Grand Council a sufficient revenue, and if that revenue is expended by them in developing methods of transport, I am confident that the trade of the district, in the hands of the private firms, will healthily expand, alike rapidly and continuously, and thereby supply more revenue, which, expended with equal wisdom, will again increase the trade and prosperity of the region, and make West Africa into a truly great possession.

The things I depend on for the development of West Africa, are mainly two. First, the sub-commissioner's town, acting in fellowship with the chiefs' council of the district. The example of that town will stimulate the

best of the chiefs to emulation; it will by every self-respecting chief, be regarded as stylish to have clean wide streets and shops, a telegraph and post-office, and things like that. Seeing that his elder brother, the sub-commissioner, has a line of telegraph connecting him with the district commission town, he will want a line of telegraph too. By all means let him have it; let him have the electric light and a telephone, if he feels he wants it, and will pay for it; but don't force these things, let them come, natural like. The great thing, however, in the sub-commissioner's town is that it should be so ruled and governed that it does not become a thing like our Coast towns now, sink—holes of moral iniquity, that stink in the nose of a respectable African—things he hates to see his sons and daughters and people go down into.

Secondly, I depend on municipal Government on the lines I have laid down for the Coast towns. The Government of these municipalities would be in the hands of the representatives of the trading firms, and the more important native traders—people, as I hold, perfectly capable of dealing with affairs, and having a community of interests.

The great difficulty in arranging any system for the government of West Africa lies not in the true difficulties this region presents, but in the fictitious difficulties that are the growth of years of mutual misunderstanding and misrepresentation. That great mass of mutual distrust, so that to-day down there white man distrusts white man and black, black man distrusts black man and white, may seem on a superficial review to be justified. But if you go deeper you will find that this distrust is the mere product of folly and ignorance, and is therefore removable.

The great practical difficulty lies in arranging a system

whereby the white trader can work on every legitimate line absolutely free from governmental hindrance. I have too great a respect for the West Coast traders to publish any criticism on them. I hold that the competition among them is too severe for them to face the present state of West Africa and prosper as men should who run so great a risk of early death as the West Coast trader runs. I should like to know who profits by their internecine war; I think no one but the native buyers of their goods. Again now, under the present Crown Colony system, the traders, knowing they are the people who have paid for the Government for years, who have given it the money it lives on, naturally ask for something back in the way of local improvements. The Government has now no money to carry out these improvements, unless it borrows it. The Government as at present existing must necessarily waste that borrowed money just as it has wasted the money the traders have paid it; therefore the consequences of improvements under the present system must be debt, which the traders must pay in the end. I would therefore urge the traders to abandon a policy of demanding improvements and protection in their trade relationships with the natives, such as ordinances against adulteration of produce, &c., and to realise that by gaining these things they are but enslaving themselves in the future. Let them rather adopt the policy of altering the form of government before they proceed to urge further governmental expenditure.

If the traders require a dry-nurse system, let them formulate one in place of the one sketched above. I do not, however, think they want anything of the kind, unless they are indeed degenerate; but, if they do, I beg them to

bear in mind that you cannot have an Alexandra feeding bottle and a latch key; they must choose one or the other. At present, the Crown Colony system gives neither. Under it the trader is treated like a child, a neglected child, one of those interesting but unfortunate children who have to support an elderly relative, who would be all the better for a cheap funeral.

Upon the missionary and educational side of the system I have advocated I need not enlarge. Just as trade should go on under it free, so should mission effort; there should be no governmental forcing of either, but it should be steadily borne in mind that the regeneration of the considerable amount of broken up stuff which exists in the Coast town regions—the Africans who have lost their old culture and their old Fetish regulation or conduct without being completely Europeanised—is a work that can only be effected by the missionary, and therefore in the hands of the missions should be placed the whole education department, with the one demand on it from the Government that in their schools every scholar should have the opportunity of acquiring a sound education in the rudiments of English reading, writing and arithmetic. Give him this knowledge, and your brilliant young African has demonstrated that he can rise to any examination such as an European university offers him. Under the system I advocate there need be no limitation as to colour in the officials employed in the municipalities. In the sub-commissioners' towns the head officials must be Englishmen, but among the regions under the Landes Hoheit in the hinterland, Africans educated as doctors or as traders could have grand careers provided they did honest work.

The consideration of the African side of this system of

administration is a thing into which—after all the long recitation I have inflicted on you concerning African religion and law—I am not justified in plunging here. I will merely, therefore, lay before you a statement of African Common Law, so that you may see the African principle through which the Landes Hoheit—the government of Africa by Africans—would work. I am confident that the thing—the African principle—is so sound that it could work; there is no need for us to put our Commerce under it, any more than there is need that we should attempt to put the African's private property under our own law; but a healthy Commerce and a healthy Law should co-operate, and can co-operate.

CHAPTER XVIII

AFRICAN PROPERTY

Wherein some attempt is made to set down the divers kinds of property that exist among the people of the true Negro race in Western Africa, and the law whereby it is governed.

IN speaking on the subject of African property and the laws which guard it in its native state, I must, in the space at my disposal here, confine myself to speaking of these things as they are in one division of the many different races of human beings that inhabit that vast continent of Africa; and, in order to present the affair more clearly, I must take them as they exist in their most highly developed state, namely, among the people of the true Negro stock, for it is among these people that pure African culture has reached so far its fullest state of development.

The distribution zone of this true Negro stock cannot yet be fixed with any approach to accuracy, but we know that the seaboard of the regions inhabited by the true Negro is that vast stretch of the African West Coast from a point south of the Gambia River to a point just north of Cameroon River, in the region of the Rio del Rey. We can safely say, within this region you will find the true Negro, but we cannot safely say how far inland, or how far down south of the Rio del Rey we shall find him. That this stock extends through up to

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the Nile regions; that it stretches far away south of the Nile in the interior of the Upper Congo regions, appearing in the Azenghi; that it stretches south on the coast line below the Rio del Rey, appearing as the so-called noble tribes of the Bight of Panavia, the Ajumba, Mpongwe, Igalwa, and also as Osheba, Befangh, will be demonstrated I believe when we have a sufficient supply of ethnological observers in Africa. But it must be remembered that you can only get the true Negro unadulterated in the coast regions of Western Africa between the Rivers Gambia and Cameroon.

In the fringe regions of the West Soudan you have an adulterated form of him—adulterated in idea with Mohammedanism, and the Berber races; to the east and to the south with that other great African race division, the Bantu. I venture to think that Bantu adulteration mainly takes the form of language. We have in our own continent many instances of races of greater strength and conquering power adopting the language of the weaker peoples whom they have conquered, when the language has been one more adapted to the needs of life and more widely diffused than their own, and therefore more suited to commercial intercourse.

The Negro languages are poor, and, moreover, they differ among themselves so gravely that one tribe cannot understand another tribe that lives even next door to it. I know 147 such languages in the region of the Niger Delta alone. Now this sort of thing means interpreters, and is hindersome to commercial intercourse, and therefore you always find the true Negro, when he is in a district where he has opportunities of trading with other peoples, adopting their language, and making for use in public life a corrupt English, Portuguese, or Arabic lingo. Similarly, it seems

to me, he has in the regions he has conquered in Southern and Central Africa, adopted Bantu, and much the same thing has happened, and is still happening, there, as happened in Southern and Central Europe. Just as the powerful barbarian stocks adopted Latin in a way that must keep Priscian's head still in bandages and to this day seriously mar his happiness in the Elysian fields, so have the true Negroes adopted the flexible Bantu languages. But it would be as unscientific to regard a Spaniard or a Frenchman as a full-blooded ancient Roman, as to regard many of the Negro tribes now speaking Bantu language as Bantu men.

The Negro has, moreover, not only adopted Bantu languages in some regions, such as the Mpongwe, for example, but he has also adopted to a certain extent Bantu culture. I am sure those of you who have lived among the true Negroes and true Bantu, will agree with me that these cultures differ materially. Africa, so far as I know it, namely, from Sierra Leone to Benguela, smells generally rather strong, but particularly so in those districts inhabited by the true Negro. This pre-eminence the true Negroes attain to by leaving the sanitary matters of villages and towns in the hands of Providence. The Bantu culture looks after the cleaning and tidying of the village streets to a remarkable degree, though by no means more clean in the houses, which, in both cultures, are quite as clean and tidy as you will find in England. Again, in the Bantu culture you will find the slaves living in villages apart: inside the true Negro they live with their owners; and there are other points which mark the domestic cultures of these people as being different from each other, which I need not detain you with now. All these points in Bantu domestic culture the true

Negro will adopt, as well as language; but there seem to be two points he does not readily adopt, or rather two points in his own culture to which he clings. One is the religious: in Bantu you find a great female god, who, for practical purposes, is more important than the great male god, in so far as she rules mundane affairs. In the true Negro the great gods are male. There are great female gods, but none of them occupy a position equal to that occupied by Nzambi, as you find the Bantu great female god called among the people who are undoubtedly true Bantu, the Fjort. The other, is the form of the State, and one important part of that form is the institution in the Negro tribes of a regular military organisation, with a regular War Lord, not one and the same with the Peace Lord.

This, I am aware, is not the customary or fashionable view of race distribution in Africa, but allow me to recall to your remembrance one of the most fascinating books ever written, *The Adventures of Andrew Battel, of Leigh in Essex*, who for eighteen years lived among the districts of the Lower Congo.

I do this in order to show that I am not theorising in this matter. Andrew Battel left London on a ship sweetly named *The May Morning*, and having a consort named the *Dolphin*—they were pinnaces of fifty tons each—on the 20th of April, 1589. With very little delay they fell into divers disasters, and Andrew became a prisoner in the hands of the Portuguese at Loanda. He had a very bad time of it, the Portuguese then regarding all Englishmen as pirates and nothing more, except heretics and vermin. Andrew, with the enterprise and common sense of our race, escaped several times from captivity, and, with the stupidity of our race fell into it again, but his great escape

was when he fell in with the Ghagas. Well, these Ghagas, Andrew Battel and the Portuguese historians say, were a fearful people, who came from behind Sierra Leone, and when the Kingdom of Congo was discovered by Diego Caõ in 1484, the Ghagas were attacking it so severely that, but for the timely arrival of the Portuguese and the help they gave Congo, there would in a very short time have been no Kingdom of Congo left to discover; and to this day Dr. Blyden, who went there on a Government mission, says that up by Fallaba, in the Sierra Leone hinterland, you will now and then see a Ghaga—a man feared, a man of whom the country people do not know where his home is, nor what he eats or how he lives, but from whom they shrink as from a superior terrible form of human being—a remnant, or remainder over, of those people whose very name struck terror throughout Central Equatorial Africa in the 15th century, when, for some reason we do not know, they made a warlike migration down among the peaceful feeble Bantu.

If you will carefully study the account given of the organisation of the Ghagas and also of the organisation of the Kingdom of Congo, I think you will see that in the Ghagas you have a true Negro State form, while in the Congo Kingdom you have something different; something that is nowadays called Bantu. What became of the Ghagas when foiled by the Portuguese in destroying the Kingdom of Congo is not exactly known, but there is a definite ground for thinking that, modified by intermarriage and a different environment, they split up, and are now represented by the warlike South African tribes and East African tribes, such as the Matabele, and the Massai, and so on. The modification of this portion of the true Negro stem in the

south and the east is akin to the modification the stem has undergone nearer to its true home on the West Coast of Africa, where to the north of Sierra Leone and behind the coast regions of the Ivory, Gold, and Slave Coasts it has, by admixture with the Berber tribes of the Western Soudan, produced the Black Moors, namely the Mandingo, the Hausa, and Oullaf. These Black Moors of the Western Soudan have attained to a high pitch of barbaric culture; it appears to be a further development of the true Negro culture, but it is so suffused with the Mohammedan idea and law that it is not in this state that we can best study the native culture of the pure Negro. Neither can we study it well in those south and east regions where it has adopted Bantu language and culture to a certain extent.

I will not, however, attempt to enter here upon the question of the continental distribution of the Negro and Bantu stocks; I will merely beg observers of African tribes to note carefully whether their tribe is given to street-cleaning, to keeping slaves in separate villages, or to venerating a great female god. If it is, it has got a Bantu culture; if, in addition, it has a regular military organisation, or a keen commercial spirit, or a certain ability to rule over the tribes round it, I beg they will suspect Negro blood and do their best to give us that tribe's migration history; and then we may in future times be able to settle the question of race distribution on better lines than our present state of knowledge allows of. Having said that the law and institutions of the true Negro stock cannot best be studied in those regions where they are adulterated by alien cultures, it remains to say where they can best be studied. I think that undoubtedly this region is that of the Oil Rivers.

The thing you must always bear in mind when observing institutions and so on from Sierra Leone down to Lagos, is that the fertile belt between the salt sea of the Bight of Benin and the sand sea of Sahara is but a narrow band of forest and fertile country, while, when you get below Lagos—Lagos itself is a tongue of the Western Soudan coming down to the sea—you are in the true heart of Africa, the Equatorial Forest Belt; and that it is in this belt that you will get your materials at their purest. Therefore take the regions inhabited by the true Negro. In the regions from Sierra Leone to the Gold Coast, you have, it is true, not much white influence or adulteration, mainly because of the rock-reefed shore being dangerous to navigators. There is in this region undoubtedly a great and yearly increasing so-called Arab, but really Mohammedanised Berber, influence working on the true Negro. The natives themselves have their State-form in a state of wreckage from the destruction of the old Empire of Meli, which fell, from reasons we do not know, some time in the 16th century. We have, however, miserably little information on this particular region of Sierra Leone, the Pepper and Ivory Coasts, owing to its never having been worked at by a competent ethnologist; but the accounts we have of it show that the secret societies have here got the upper hand to an abnormal extent for the Negro state. Then we come to the Gold Coast region which has been so excellently worked at by the late Sir A. B. Ellis. Here you have a heavy amount of adulteration in idea, and, moreover, the long-continued white influence —1435–1898—has decidedly tended to a disorganisation of the Negro State-form, and to an undue development of the individual chief; nevertheless the law-form now existent on the Gold Coast is, when tested against a

knowledge of the pure Negro law-form as found in the Oil Rivers, almost unaltered, and I think if you will carefully study that valuable book, Sarbar's *Fanti Customary Law*, you will also see that the State-form is identical in essence with that of the Oil Rivers—the House system.

The House is a collection of individuals; I should hesitate to call it a developed family. I cannot say it is a collection of human beings, because the very dogs and canoes and so on that belong to it are part of it in the eye of the law, and capable therefore alike of embroiling it and advancing its interests. These Houses are bound together into groups by the Long ju-ju proper to the so-called secret society, common to the groups of houses. The House itself is presided over by what is called, in white parlance, a king, and beneath him there are four classes of human beings in regular rank, that is to say, influence in council: firstly, the free relations of the king, if he be a free man himself, which is frequently not the case; if he be a slave, the free people of the family he is trustee for; secondly, the free small people who have placed themselves under the protection of the House, rendering it in return for the assistance and protection it affords them service on demand; the third and fourth classes are true slave classes, the higher one in rank being that called the Winnaboes or Trade boys, the lower the pull-away boys and the plantation hands.[1] The best point in it, as a system, is that it gives to the poorest boy who paddles an oil canoe a chance of becoming a king.

Property itself in West Africa, and as I have reason to believe from reports in other parts of tropical Africa that I

[1] See "Lecture on African Religion and Law," published by leave of the Hibbert Trustees in the *National Review*. September, 1897.

am acquainted with, is firmly governed and is divisible into three kinds. Firstly, ancestral property connected with the office of headmanship, the Stool, as this office is called in the true Negro state, the Cap, as it is called down in Bas Congo; secondly, family property, in which every member of the family has a certain share, and on which he, she, or it has a claim; thirdly, private property, that which is acquired or made by a man or woman by their personal exertions, over and above that which is earned by them in co-operation with other members of their family which becomes family property, and that which is gained by gifts or made in trade by the exercise of a superior trading ability.

Every one of these forms of property is equally sacred in the eye of the African law. The property of the Stool must be worked for the Stool; working it well, increasing it, adds to the importance of the Stool, and makes the king who does so popular; but he is trustee, not owner, of the Stool property, and his family don't come in for that property on his death, for every profit made by the working of Stool property is like this itself the property of the Stool, and during the king's life he cannot legally alienate it for his own personal advantage, but can only administer it for the benefit of the Stool.

The king's power over the property of the family and the private property of the people under his rule, consists in the right of Ban, but not arrière Ban. Family property is much the same as regards the laws concerning it as Stool property. The head of the family is the trustee of it. If he is a spendthrift, or unlucky in its management, he is removed from his position. Any profit he may make with the assistance of a member of his own family becomes family property; but of course any profit he may make with the

assistance of his free wives or wife, a person who does not belong to his family, or with the assistance of an outsider, may become his own. Private property acquired in the ways I have mentioned is equally sacred in the eyes of the law. I do not suppose you could find a single human being, slave or free, who had not some private property of his or her very own. Amongst that very interesting and valuable tribe, the Kru, where the family organisation is at its strictest, you can see the anxiety of the individual Kruman to secure for himself a little portion of his hard-earned wages and save it from the hands of his family elders. The Kruman's wages are paid to him, or changed by him, into cloths and sundry merchandise, and he is not paid off until the end of his term of work. So he has to hurry up in order to appropriate to himself as much as he can on the boat that takes him back to his beloved "We" country, and industriously make for himself garments out of as much of his cotton goods as he can; for even a man's family, even in Kru country, will not take away his shirt and trousers, but I am afraid there is precious little else that the Kruman can save from their rapacity. What he can save in addition to these, he informs me, he gives to his mother, or failing his mother, to a favourite sister, who looks after it and keeps it for him, she being, woman-like, more fit to quarrel if need be with the family elders than he is himself. But all private property once secured is sacred, very sacred, in the African State-form. I do not know from my own investigations, nor have I been able to find evidence in the investigations of other observers, of any king, priesthood, or man, who would openly dare interfere with the private property of the veriest slave in his district, diocese, or household. I know this seems a risky thing to

say, and I do not like to say it because I feel that if I were a betting man I could make a good thing over betting on it, for experience has taught me that every time an African's property is taken by a fellow African under native law, and in times of peace, it is taken after it is confiscated by its original owner, either in bankruptcy or crime. You will hear dozens of accounts of how everything an African possessed was seized on, etc., but if you look into them you will find in every case that the individual so cleaned out owed it all, and frequently far more, before he or she fell into the hands of the Official Receiver, the local chief.

One of the most common causes of an individual's entire estate being seized upon is a conviction for witchcraft. Every form of property in Africa is liable to be called on to meet its owner's debts, and the witch's is too heavy a debt for any individual's private estate to meet and leave a surplus. For not only does the witch owe to the family of the person, of whose murder he or she is convicted, the price of that life, but it is felt by the Community that the witch has not been found out in the first offence, and so every miscellaneous affliction that has recently happened is put down to the convicted witch's account. Mind you, I do not say *all* these claims are *satisfied* out of the estate of the witch deceased, (witches are always deceased by the authorities with the utmost despatch after conviction) because the said property has during the course of the trial got into the hands of Officialdom and has a natural tendency to stop there. But one thing is certain, there is no residuary estate for the witch's own relations. Not that for the matter of that they would dare claim it in any case, lest they should be involved with the witch and accused as accomplices.

Still, legally, the witch's relations have the consolation of

knowing that, if things go smoothly and they evade being accused of a share in the crime, they cannot be called on to meet the debts incurred by the witch. From a family point of view better a dead witch than a live speculative trader.

The reason of this delicate little point of law I confess gave me more trouble to discover than it ought to have done, for the explanation was quite simple, namely, the witch's body had been taken over by the creditors.

Now, according to African law, if you take a man's life, or, for the matter of that, his body, dead or alive, in settlement of a debt, your claim is satisfied. You have got legal tender for it. I remember coming across an amusing demonstration of this law in the colony of Cameroon. There was, and still is, a windy-headed native trader there who for years has hung by the hair of loans over the abyss of bankruptcy. All the local native traders knew that man, but there arrived a new trader across from Calabar district who did not. Like the needle to the pole, our friend turned to him for a loan in goods and got it, with the usual result namely, excuses, delays, promises—in fact anything but payment; enraged at this, and determined to show the Cameroon traders at large how to carry on business on modern lines, the young Calabar trader called in the Government and the debtor was gently but firmly confined to the Government grounds. Of course he was not put in the chain-gang, not being a serious criminal, but provided with a palm-mat broom he proceeded to do as little as possible with it, and lead a contented, cheerful existence.

It rather worried the Calabar man to see this, and also that his drastic measure caused no wild rush to him of remonstrating relations of the imprisoned debtor; indeed they did

not even turn up to supply the said debtor with food, let alone attempt to buy him off by discharging his debt. In place of them, however, one by one the Cameroon traders came to call on the Calabar merchant, all in an exceedingly amiable state of mind and very civil. They said it gave them pleasure to observe his brisk method of dealing with that man, and it was a great relief to their minds to see a reliable man of wealth like himself taking charge of that debtor's affairs, for now they saw the chance of seeing the money they had years ago advanced, and of which they had not, so far, seen a fraction back, neither capital nor interest. The Calabar man grew pale and anxious as the accounts of the debts he had made himself responsible for came in, and he knew that if the debtor died on his hands, that is to say in the imprisonment he had consigned him to, he would be obliged to pay back all those debts of the Cameroon man, for the German Government have an intelligent knowledge of native law and carry it out in Cameroon. Still the Calabar man did not like climbing down and letting the man go, so he supplied him with food and worried about his state of health severely. This that villainous Cameroon fellow found out, and was therefore forthwith smitten with an obscure abdominal complaint, a fairly safe thing to have as my esteemed friend Dr. Plehn was absent from that station, and therefore not able to descend on the malingerer with nauseous drugs. It is needless to say that at this juncture the Calabar man gave in, and let the prisoner out, freeing himself thereby from responsibility beyond his own loss, but returning a poorer and a wiser man to his own markets, and more assured than ever of the villainy of the whole Dualla tribe.

In any case legally the relatives of a debtor seized or

pawned can redeem, if they choose, the person or the body by paying off the debt with the interest, 33⅓ per cent. per annum, to the common rate. Great sacrifices and exertions are made by his family to redeem almost every debtor, and the family property is strained to its utmost on his or her behalf; but in the case of a witch it is different, no set of relatives wish to redeem a convicted witch, who, reduced by the authorities to a body, and that mostly in bits and badly damaged, is not a thing desirable. No! they say Society has got him and we are morally certain he must have been illegitimate, for such a thing as a witch never happened in our family before, and if we show the least interest in the remains we shall get accused ourselves. Of course if a man or woman's life is taken on any other kind of accusation save witchcraft, the affair is on a different footing. The family then forms a higher estimate of the deceased's value than they showed signs of to him or her when living, and they try to screw that value to the uttermost farthing out of the person who has killed their kinsman. Society at large only regards you for doing this as a fool man to think so highly of the departed, whose true value it knows to be far below that set on him. In the case of a living man taken for debt, he is a slave to his creditor, a pawn slave, but not on the same footing as a boughten slave; he has not the advantages of a true slave in the matter of succeeding to the wealth or position of the house, but against that he can be a free man the moment his debts are paid. This may be a theoretical possibility only, just as it would be theoretical for me to expect my family to bail me out if the bail were a question of a million sterling, but in legal principle the redemption is practicable.

In the case of taking a dead body another factor is

introduced. By taking charge of and interring a body, you become the executor to the deceased man's estate. I have known three sets of relatives arrive with three coffins for one body, and a consequential row, for a good deal can be made by an executor; but if you make yourself liable for the body's liabilities care is needed, and there is no reckless buying of bodies with whose private affairs you are not conversant, in West Africa. It is far too wild a speculation for such quiet commercial men as my African friends are. Hence it comes that a Negro merchant on a trading tour away from his home, overtaken by death in a town where he is not known, is not buried, but dried and carefully put outside the town, or on the road to the market, the road he came by, so that any one of his friends or relations, who may perchance come some time that way, can recognise the remains. If they do they can take the remains home and bury them if they like, or bury them there, free and welcome, but the local County Council will do nothing of the kind. A nice thing a set of respectable elders, or as their Fanti, name goes Paynim, would let themselves in for by burying the body of a gentleman who happened to have four murders, ten adultery cases, a crushing mass of debt, and no earthly assets save a few dilapidated women, bad ones at that, and a whole pack of children with the Kraw Kraw, or the Guinea worm, or both together and including the Yaws.

This brings us to another way besides witchcraft whereby a gentleman in West Africa can throw away a fine fortune by paying his debts, namely, the so-called adultery. Adultery out there, I hastily beg to remark, may be only brushing against a woman in a crowded market place or bush path, or raising a hand in defence against a virago. It's the wrong

word, but the customary one to use for touching women, and it is exceedingly expensive and a constant source of danger to the most respectable of men, the demands made on its account being exorbitant: sometimes so exorbitant that I have known of several men who, in order to save their family from ruin—for if their own private property were insufficient to meet it the family property would be liable for the balance—have given themselves up as pawn-slaves to their accusers.

There is but one check on this evil of frivolous and false accusation, and that is that when there have been many cases of it in a district, the cult of the Law God of that region gets a high moral fit on and comes down on that district and eats the adultery. I need not say that this is to the private benefit of no layman in the district, for notoriously it is an expensive thing to have the Law God down, and a thing every district tries to avoid. There is undoubtedly great evil in this law, which presses harder on private and family property than anything else, harder even than accusations of witchcraft; but it safeguards the women, enabling them to go to and fro about the forest paths, and in the villages and market places at home, and far from home, without fear of molestation or insult, bar that which they get up amongst themselves.

The methods employed in enforcing the payment of a debt are appeal to the village headman or village elders; or, after giving warning, the seizure of property belonging to the debtor if possible, or if not, that of any other person belonging to his village will do. This procedure usually leads to palaver, and the elders decide whether the amount seized is equal to the debt or whether it is excessive; if excessive the excess has to be returned, and there is also the appeal to the Law Society. In the regions of the Benin

Bight we have also, as in India, the custom of collecting debts by Dharna. In West Africa the creditor who sits at the debtor's door is bound to bring with him food for one day, this is equivalent to giving notice; after the first day the debtor has to supply him with food, for were he to die he would be answerable for his life and the worth thereof in addition to the original debt. If I mention that there is no community of goods between a man and his wife (women owning and holding property under identical conditions to men in the eye of the law), I think I shall have detained you more than long enough on the subject of the laws of property in West Africa. You will see that the thing that underlies them is the conception that every person is the member of some family, and all the other members of the family are responsible for him and to him and he to them; and every family is a member of some house, and all the other members of the house are responsible for and to the families of which it is composed.

The natural tendency of this is for property to become joint property, family property, or to be absorbed into family property. A man by his superior ability acquires, it may be, a considerable amount of private property, but at his death it passes into the hands of the family. There are Wills, but they are not the rule, and they more often refer to an appointment of a successor in position than to a disposal of effects. The common practice of gifts there supplies the place of Wills with us; a rich man gives his friend or his favourite wife, child, or slave, things during his life, while he can see that they get it, and does not leave the matter till after his death. The good point about the African system is that it leaves no person uncared for; there are no unemployed starving poor, every individual is

responsible for and to his fellow men and women who belong to the same community, and the naturally strong instinct of hospitality, joined with the knowledge that the stranger within the gates belongs to a whole set of people who will make palaver if anything happens to him, looks well after the safety of wanderers in Negro land. The bad point is, of course that the system is cumbersome, and, moreover, it tends, with the operation of the general African law of *mutterrecht*, the tracing of descent through females, to prevent the building up of great families. For example, you have a great man, wise, learned, just, and so on ; he is esteemed in his generation, but at his death his property does not go to the sons born to him by one of his wives, who is a great woman of a princely line, but to the eldest son of his sister by the same mother as his own. This sister's mother and his own mother was a slave wife of his father's ; this, you see, keeps good blood in a continual state of dilution with slave blood. The son he has by his aristocratic wife may come in for the property of her brother, but her brother belongs to a different family, so he does not take up his father's greatness and carry it on with the help his father's wealth could give him in the father's family. I do not say the system is unjust or anything like that, mind ; I merely say that it does not tend to the production of a series of great men in one family.

Nevertheless, when once you have mastered the simple fundamental rules that underlie the native African idea of property they must strike you as just, elaborately just ; and there is another element of simplicity in the thing, and that is that all forms of property are subject to the same law, land, women, china basons, canoes, slaves, it matters not what, there is the law.

You will ofter hear of the vast stretches of country in Africa unowned, and open to all who choose to cultivate them or possess them. Well, those stretches of unowned land are not in West Africa. I do not pretend to know other parts of the continent. In West Africa there is not one acre of land that does not belong to some one, who is trustee of it, for a set of people who are themselves only life tenants, the real owner being the tribe in its past, present, and future state, away into eternity at both ends. But as West African land is a thing I should not feel, even if I had the money, anxious to acquire as freehold, and as you can get under native law a safe possession of mining and cultivation rights from the representatives living of the tribe they belong to, I do not think that any interference is urgently needed with a system fundamentally just.

After having said so much on African native property, it may be as well to say what African property consists of. It is not necessary for me to go into the affair very fully, but you will remember, I am sure, the old statement of "women and slaves constitute the wealth of an African." The African himself would tell you nine times in ten that women and slaves caused him the lack of it. Still they are undoubtedly a factor in the true Negro's wealth, but to consider them property it is necessary to consider them as property in different classes. Here and now I need only divide them into two classes—wives properly so-called, and male and female slaves. The duty of the slave is to increase directly the wealth of his or her owner—that of the wife to increase it also, but in a different manner, namely, by bringing her influence to bear for his advantage among her own family and among the people of the district she lives in. A big chief will have three or more

of these wives, each of them living in her own house, or in the culture state of Calabar, in her own yard in his house, having her own farm away in the country, where she goes at planting and harvest times. She possesses her own slaves and miscellaneous property, which includes her children, and the main part of this property is really the property of her family, just as most people's property is in West Africa. The husband will reside with each of these wives in turn, yet he has a home of his own, with his slave wives, and his children properly so called, similarly having his own farm and miscellaneous property, which similarly belongs mainly to his family, and this house is usually presided over by his mother, or failing her a favourite sister.

The immediate rule of a husband over his wife may be likened to that of a constitutional monarch, that of a man or woman over a slave to that of an absolute monarch, though true absolutism is in the Negro State-form not to be found in any individual man. The nearest approach to it is, very properly, in the hands of the cult of the Law God, the tribal secret society, but even from that society the individual can appeal, if he dare, to Long Ju Ju.

The other forms of wealth possessed by an African, his true wealth, are market rights, utensils, canoes, arms, furniture, land, and trade goods. It is in his capacity to command these things in large quantities that his wealth lies, it is his wives and slaves who enable and assist him to do this thing. So take the whole together and you will see how you can have a very rich African, rich in the only way it is worth while being rich in, power, yet a man who possibly could not pay you down £20, but a real millionaire for all that.

APPENDICES

JA JA, KING OF OPOBO. [*To face page* 443.

APPENDIX I

A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIVES OF THE NIGER COAST PROTECTORATE, WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THEIR CUSTOMS, RELIGION, TRADE, &c. BY M. LE COMTE C. N. DE CARDI.

IT is with some diffidence I attempt this task, because many more able men have written about this country, with whom occasionally I shall most likely be found not quite in accord; but if a long residence in and connection with a country entitles one to be heard, then I am fully qualified, for I first went to Western Africa in 1862, and my last voyage was in 1896.

Previous to 1891, the date at which this Coast (Benin to Old Calabar) was formed into a British Protectorate under the name of the Oil Rivers Protectorate, now the Niger Coast Protectorate, each of the rivers frequented by Europeans for the purpose of trade was ruled over more or less intelligently by one, and in some cases by two, sable potentates, who were responsible to Her Britannic Majesty's Consul for the safety and well-being of the white traders; also for the fostering of trade in the hinterlands of their district, for which good offices they were paid by the white traders a duty called "comey," which amounted to about 2s. 6d. per ton on the palm oil exported. When the palm

kernel trade commenced it was generally arranged that two tons of palm kernels should be counted to equal one ton of palm oil so far as regards fiscal arrangements. The day this duty was paid was looked upon by the king, or kings if there were two of them, as a festival; in earlier years a certain amount of ceremony was also observed.

The king would arrive on board the trader's hulk or sailing ship (some firms doing their trade without the assistance of a hulk) to an accompaniment of war horns, drums, and other savage music. With the king would generally come one or two of his chiefs and his Ju-Ju man, but before mounting the gangway ladder a bottle of spirit or palm wine would be produced from some hidden receptacle, one of the small boys, who always follow the kings or chiefs to carry their handkerchiefs and snuff-boxes, would then draw the cork and hand a wine-glass and the bottle to the Ju-Ju man, who would pour himself out a glass, saying a few words to the Ju-Ju of the river, at the same time spilling a little of the liquor into the water; he would then drink up what remained in the glass, hand glass and bottle to the king, who would then proceed as the Ju-Ju man had done, being followed on the same lines by the chiefs who were with him.

Their devotions having thus been duly attended to, the king, Ju-Ju man and his attendant chiefs would mount the ladder to the deck of the vessel. The European trader would, as a rule, be there to receive him and escort him on to the poop, where the king would be asked to sit down to a sumptuous repast of pickled pork, salt beef, tinned salmon, pickles and cabin biscuits. There would be also roast fowls and goat for the trader and his assistants, and for

vegetables yams and potatoes, the latter a great treat for the white men, but not thought much of by the natives.

The king with his friends making terrific onslaughts on the pork, beef and tinned salmon, after having eaten all they could would ask for more, and pile up a plate of beef, pork and salmon, if there was any left, to pass out to their attendants on the main deck, at the same time begging some biscuits for their pull-away boys in the canoe, a request always acceded to.

Drinkables, you will observe, so far have had no part in the feed; it is because these untutored natives follow Nature's laws much closer than Europeans, and never drink until they have finished eating. The king, having done justice to the victuals, now politely intimates to the European trader that "he be time for wash mouth." Being asked what his sable majesty would like to do it in, he generally elects "port win," as the natives call port wine. His chiefs, not being such connoisseurs as his majesty, are, as a rule, satisfied with a bottle or two of beer or gin, carefully sticking to the empty bottles.

In the meantime, had you looked over the side of the ship, you would have wondered what his majesty's forty or fifty canoe boys were doing, so carefully divesting themselves of every rag of cloth and hiding it by folding it up as small as possible and sitting on it. This was so as to point out to the trader, when he came to the gangway to see the king away, that "he no be proper for king's boys no have cloth."

The king, having duly washed his mouth, is now ready to proceed with the business of his visit. The payment of the comey is very soon arranged, it being a settled sum and the different goods having their recognised value in

pawns, bars, coppers or crues according to the currency of the particular river.

But the "shake hand"[1] is now to be got through, and the "dashing"[2] to the king; his friends who are with him want their part, and it would surprise a stranger the number of wants that seem to keep cropping up in a West African king s mind as he wobbles about your ship, until, finding he has begged every mortal thing that he can, he suddenly makes up his mind that further importunity will be useless ; he decides to order his people into his canoe, which in most cases they obey with surprising alacrity, brought about, I have no doubt, by the thought that now comes their turn.

Arrived at the gangway, his majesty, in the most natural way imaginable, notices for the first time (?) that his boys are all naked, and turning with an appealing look to the trader, he points out the bareness of the royal pull-away boys, and intimates that no white trader who respects himself could think of allowing such a state of things to continue a moment longer. This meant at least a further dash of four dozen fishermen's striped caps and about twelve pieces of Manchester cloth.

One would suppose that this was the last straw, but before his majesty gets into his canoe several more little wants crop up, amongst others a tot of rum each for his canoe boys, and perchance a few fathoms of rope to make a new painter for his canoe, until sometimes the

[1] "Shake-hand" was a present given by a trader each voyage on his arrival on the coast to the king and the chiefs who traded with him ; the Europeans themselves gradually increased this to such an extent that some of the kings began to look upon it as a right, which led to endless palavers ; if it is not completely abolished by now, it ought to be.

[2] "Dashing"—native word for making presents. This word is a corruption of a Portuguese word.

white trader almost loses his temper. I have heard of one (?) who did on one occasion, and being an Irishman, he thus apostrophised one of these sable kings, "Be jabers, king, I am thinking if I dashed you my ship you would be after wanting me to dash you the boats belonging to her, and after that to supply you with paint to paint them with for the next ten years." There was a glare in that Irishman's eye, and that king noticed it, and decided the time had come for him to scoot, and history says he scooted. In the early days of the palm oil trade, the custom inaugurated by the slave traders of receiving the king on his visit to the ship was by a salute of six or seven guns, and another of equal number on his departure, the latter being an intimation to all whom it might concern that his majesty had duly received his comey, and that trade was open with the said ship. This was continued for some years, but as the security of the seas became greater in those parts the trading ships gave up the custom of carrying guns, and the intimation that the king "done broke trade" with the last arrival was effected by his majesty sending off a canoe of oil to the ship, and the sending round of a verbal message by one of the king's men.

Since the year 1891 the kings of the Oil Rivers have been relieved of the duty of collecting comey, as a regular government of these rivers has been inaugurated by H.B.M. Government, comey being replaced by import duties.

NATIVE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT IN BENIN, AND RELIGION

THOUGH there is a great similarity in the native form of government in these parts, it would be impossible to convey a true description of the manners and customs of the various places if I did not treat of each river and its people separately; I shall therefore commence by describing the people of Benin.

The Benin kingdom, so far as this account of it will go, was said to extend from the boundaries of the Mahin country (a district between the British Colony of Lagos and the Benin River) and the river Ramos; thus on the coast line embracing the rivers Benin, Escravos, and Forcados, also the hinterland, taking in Warri up to the Yoruba States.

For the purpose of the work I have set myself, I shall treat of that part of the kingdom that may be embraced by a line drawn from the mouth of the river Ramos up to the town of Warri, thence to Benin City, and brought down to the coast a little to the north of the Benin River. This tract of country is inhabited by four tribes, viz., the Jakri tribe, the dominant people on the coast line; the Sobo tribe, a very timid but most industrious people, great producers of palm oil, as well as being great agriculturists; an unfortunate people placed as they were between the extortions of the Jakris and the slave raiding of the Benin City king for his various sacrificial purposes; the third tribe are the Ijos, inhabiting the lower parts of the Escravos, Forcados, and Ramos rivers; this latter tribe are great canoe builders and agriculturists in a small way, produce

a little palm oil, and by some people are accused of being cannibals; this latter accusation I don't think they deserve, in the full acceptation of the word, for thirty-three years ago I passed more than a week in one of their towns, when I was quite at their mercy, being accompanied by no armed men and carrying only a small revolver myself, which never came out of my pocket. Since when I have visited some of their towns on the Bassa Creek outside the boundary I have drawn for the purpose of this narrative, and never was I treated with the least disrespect.

The fourth tribe is the Benin people proper, whose territory is supposed to extend as far back as the boundaries of the Yoruba nation, starting from the right bank of the Benin River. In this territory is the once far-famed city of Benin, where lived the king, to whom the Jakri, the Sobo, and the Ijo tribes paid tribute.

These people have at all times since their first intercourse with Europeans, now some four hundred years, been renowned for their barbaric customs.

The earlier travellers who visited Benin City do not mention human sacrifices among these customs, but I have no doubt they took place; as these travellers were generally traders and wanted to return to Benin for trade purposes, they most likely thought the less said on the subject the best. I find, however, that in the last century more than one traveller mentions the sacrifice of human beings by the king of Benin, but do not lead one to imagine that it was carried to the frightful extent it has been carried on in later years.

I think myself that the custom of sacrificing human beings has been steadily increasing of late years, as the city of Benin became more and more a kind of holy city amongst the pagan tribes.

Their religion, like that of all the neighbouring pagans, admits of a Supreme Being, maker of all things, but as he is supposed to be always doing good, there is no necessity to sacrifice to him.

They, however, implicitly believe in a malignant spirit, to whom they sacrifice men and animals to satiate its thirst for blood and prevent it from doing them any harm.

Some of the pagan customs are of a sanitary character. Take, for instance, the yam custom. This custom is more or less observed all along the West Coast of Africa, and where it is unattended by any sacrificing of human or animal life, except the latter be to make a feast, it should be encouraged as a kind of harvest festival. When I say this was a sanitary law, I must explain that the new yams are a most dangerous article of food if eaten before the yam custom has been made, which takes place a certain time after the yams are found to be fit for taking out of the ground.

The new yams are often offered for sale to the Europeans at the earliest moment that they can be dug up, some weeks in many cases before the custom is made; the consequence is that many Europeans contract severe attacks of dysentery and fever about this time.

The well-to-do native never touches them before the proper time, but the poorer classes find it difficult to keep from eating them, as they are not only very sweet, but generally very cheap when they first come on the market.

The king of Benin was assisted in the government of his country and his tributaries by four principal officers; three of these were civil officers; these officers and the Ju-Ju men were the real governors of the country, the king being little more than a puppet in their hands.

It was these three officers who decided who should be appointed governor of the lower river, generally called New Benin.

Their choice as a rule fell upon the most influential chief of the district, their last choice being Nana, the son of the late chief Alumah, the most powerful and richest chief that had ever been known amongst the Jakri men. I shall have more to say about Nana when I am dealing with the Jakri tribe.

Amongst the principal annual customs held by the king of Old Benin, were the customs to his predecessors, generally called "making father" by the English-speaking native of the coast.

The coral custom was another great festival; besides these there were many occasional minor customs held to propitiate the spirit of the sun, the moon, the sky, and the earth. At most of these, if not all, human sacrifices were made.

Kings of Benin did not inherit by right of birth; the reigning king feeling that his time to leave this earth was approaching, would select his successor from amongst his sons, and calling his chief civil officer would confide to him the name of the one he had selected to follow him.

Upon the king's death this officer would take into his own charge the property of the late king, and receive the homage of all the expectant heirs; after enjoying the position of regent for some few days he would confide his secret to the chief war minister, and the chosen prince would be sent for and made to kneel, while they declared to him the will of his father. The prince thereupon would thank these two officers for their faithful services, and then he was immediately proclaimed king of Benin.

Now commences trouble for the non-successful claimants; the king's throne must be secure, so they and their sons must be suppressed. As it was not allowed to shed royal blood, they were quietly suffocated by having their noses, mouths and ears stuffed with cloth. To somewhat take the sting out of this cruel proceeding they were given a most pompous funeral.

Whilst on the subject of funerals I think I had better tell you something about the funeral customs of the Benineese.

When a king dies, it is said, his domestics solicit the honour of being buried with him, but this is only accorded to a few of his greatest favourites (I quite believe this to have been true, for I have seen myself slaves of defunct chiefs appealing to be allowed to join their late master); these slaves are let down into the grave alive, after the corpse has been placed therein. Graves of kings and chiefs in Western Africa being nice roomy apartments, generally about 12 feet by 8 by 14, but in Benin, I am told, the graves have a floor about 16 feet by 12, with sides tapering to an aperture that can be closed by a single flag-stone. On the morning following the interment, this flag-stone was removed, and the people down below asked if they had found the King. This question was put to them every successive morning, until no answer being returned it was concluded that the slaves had found their master. Meat was then roasted on the grave-stone and distributed amongst the people with a plentiful supply of drink, after which frightful orgies took place and great licence allowed to the populace—murders taking place and the bodies of the murdered people being brought as offerings to the departed, though at any other time murder was severely punished. Chiefs and women of distinction are

also entitled to pompous funerals, with the usual accompaniment of massacred slaves. If a native of Benin City died in a distant part of the kingdom, the corpse used to be dried over a gentle fire and conveyed to this city for interment. Cases have been known where a body having been buried with all due honours and ceremonies, it has been afterwards taken up and the same ceremonies as before gone through a second time.

The usual funeral ceremonies for a person of distinction last about seven or eight days, and consist, besides the human sacrifices, of lamentations, dancing, singing and considerable drinking.

The near relatives mourn during several months—some with half their heads shaved, others completely shaven.

The law of inheritance for people of distinction differs from that of the kings in the fact that the eldest son inherits by right of primogeniture, and succeeds to all his father's property, wives and slaves. He generally allows his mother a separate establishment and maintenance and finds employment and maintenance for his father's other wives in the family residence. He is expected to act liberally with his younger brothers, but there is no law on this question. Before entering into full possession of his father's property he must petition the king to allow him to do so, accompanying the said petition with a present to the king of a slave, as also one to each of the three great officers of the king. This petition is invariably granted. A widow cannot marry again without the permission of her son, if she have a son ; or if he be too young, the man who marries her must supply a female slave to wait upon him instead of his mother.

Theft was punished by fine only, if the stolen property

was restored, but by flogging if the thief was unable to make restitution.

Murder was of rare occurrence. When detected it was punished with death by decapitation, and the body of the culprit was quartered and exposed to the beasts and birds of prey.

If the murderer be a man of some considerable position he was not executed, but escorted out of the country and never allowed to return.

In case of a murder committed in the heat of passion, the culprit could arrange matters by giving the dead person a suitable funeral, paying a heavy fine to the three chief officers of the king and supplying a slave to suffer in his place. In this case he was bound to kneel and keep his forehead touching the slave during his execution.

In all cases where an accusation was not clearly proved, the accused would have to undergo an ordeal to prove his guilt or innocence. To fully describe the whole of these would fill several hundred pages, and as most of them could be managed by the Ju-Ju men in such a way, that they could prove a man guilty or innocent according to the amount of present they had received from the accused's friends, I will pass on to other subjects.

Adultery was very severely punished in whatever class it took place ; in the lower classes all the property of the guilty man passed at once to the injured husband, the woman being severely flogged and expelled from her husband's house.

Amongst the middle class this crime could be atoned for by the friends of the guilty woman making a money present to the injured husband ; and the lady would be restored to her outraged lord's favour.

The upper classes revenged themselves by having the two culprits instantly put to death, except when the male culprit belonged to the upper classes; then the punishment was generally reduced to banishment from the kingdom of Benin for life.

Amongst these people one finds some peculiar customs concerning children. Amongst others, a child is supposed to be under great danger from evil spirits until it has passed its seventh day. On this day a small feast is provided by the parents; still it is thought well to propitiate the evil spirits by strewing a portion of the feast round the house where the child is.

Twin children, according to some accounts, were not looked upon with the same horror in Benin as they are in other parts of the Niger Delta; as a fact, they were looked upon with favour, except in one town of the kingdom, the name of which I have never been able to get, nor have I been able to locate the spot; but wherever it is, I am informed both mother and children were sacrificed to a demon, who resided in a wood in the neighbourhood of this town.

This law of killing twin children, like most Ju-Ju laws, could be got over if the father was himself not too deeply steeped in Ju-Juism, and was sufficiently wealthy to bribe the Ju-Ju priests. The law was always mercilessly carried out in the case of the poorer class of natives—the above refers solely to the part of Benin kingdom directly under the king of Old Benin, and does not hold good with regard to the Sobos, Jakris, or Ijos.

ORIGIN OF THE BENIN CITY PEOPLE

According to Clapperton the Benin people are descendants of the Yoruba tribes, the Yoruba tribes being descended from six brothers, all the sons of one mother. Their names were Ikelu, Egba, Ijebu, Ifé, Ibini (Benin), and Yoruba.

According to the late Sultan Bello (the Foulah chief of Sokoto at the time of Captain Clapperton's visit to that city), the Yoruba tribes are descended from the children of Canaan, who were of the tribe of Nimrod.

In my opinion there is room for much speculation on this statement of the Sultan Bello.

It is a very curious fact that the people of Benin City have been, from the earliest accounts we have of them, great workers in brass. Might not the ancestors of this people have brought the art of working in brass with them from the far distant land of Canaan? Moses, when speaking of the land of Canaan, says, "out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass" (Deut. viii. 9). Here we must understand copper to be meant; because brass is not dug out of the earth, but copper is, and found in abundance in that part of the world.

Yet another curious subject for reflection, from the first information that European travellers give us (*circa* 1485) in their descriptions of the city of Benin, mention has invariably made of towers, from the summits of which monster brass serpents were suspended. Upon the entry of the punitive expedition into Benin City in the month of February, 1897, Benin City still possessed one of these serpents in brass, not hanging from a tower, but laid upon the roof of one of the king's houses.

Might not these brazen serpents be a remnant of some tradition handed down from the time of Moses? for do we not read in the Scriptures, that the people of Israel had sinned; and God to punish them sent fiery serpents, which bit the people, and many died. Then Moses cried to God, and God told him to make a serpent of brass, and set it on a pole. (Numbers xxi. 9.)

While on the subject of serpents, I may mention that in the neighbourhood of Benin, there is a Ju-Ju ordeal pond or river, said to be infested with dangerous and poisonous snakes and alligators, through which a man accused of any crime passing unscathed proves his innocence.

There are some other customs connected with the position of the king of Benin, as the head of the Ju-Juism of his country, which seem to have some trace of a Biblical origin, but which I will not discuss here, but leave to the ethnologists to unravel, if they can.

That they were a superior people to the surrounding tribes is amply demonstrated by their being workers in brass and iron; displaying considerable art in some of their castings in brass, iron, copper and bronze, their carving in ivory, and their manufacture of cotton cloth—no other people in the Delta showing any such ability.

The Jakri tribe, who inhabit that part of the country lying between the Sobo country and the Ijo country, were the dominant tribe in the lower or New Benin country. Being themselves tributary to the Benin king, they dare not make the Sobo or Ijo men pay a direct tribute to them for the right to live, but they indirectly took a much larger tribute from them than ever they paid the king of Benin.

The Jakris were the brokers, and would not allow either of the above-named tribes to trade direct with the white men.

The principal towns of the Jakri men were:—Brohemie[1] (destroyed by the English in 1894): this town was generally called Nana's town of late years. Nana was Governor of the whole of the country lying between a line drawn from the Gwato Creek to Wari and the sea-coast; his governorship extending a little beyond the Benin River, and running down the coast to the Ramos River. This appointment he held from the king of Benin, and was officially recognised by the British Consul as the headman of the Jakri tribe, and for any official business in connection with the country over which he was Governor. Jeboo or Chief Peggy's town, situated on the waterway to Lagos; Jaquah town or Chief Ogrie's town. The above towns are all on the right bank of the river.

On the left bank of the river are found the following towns:—Bateri, or Chief Numa's town, lying about half an hour's pull in a boat from Déli Creek. Chief Numa, was the son of the late Chief Chinomé, a rival in his day to Allumah, the father of Nana, the late Governor; Chinomé was the son of Queen Doto of Wari, who years ago was most anxious to see the white man at her town, and repeatedly advised the white men to use the

[1] Brohemie, founded by the late chief Alluma between fifty and sixty years ago. Chinomé, a powerful chief, fought with Allumah in 1864-5 for supremacy; the former was conquered, and died some few years after. Chief Dudu, not mentioned in the text, founded in 1890 Dudu town, and is to-day a most loyal and respected chief. Chief Peggy died in 1889. Chief Ogrie died in 1892, Chief Bregbi also died some years ago.

Forcados for their principal trading station; but the old Chief Allumah was against any such exodus, and as he was a very big trader in palm-oil, he of course carried the day, and the white men stuck to their swamp at the mouth of the river Benin.

Close to Numa's town his brother Fragoni has established a small town. At some little distance from Bateri is Booboo, or the late Chief Bregbi's town. Galey, the eldest son of the late Chinomé, has a small town in the Déli Creek. This man, though the eldest son of the late Chief Chinomé, is not a chief, though his younger brother Numa is. Here is a knotty point in Jakri law of inheritance, which differs from the Benin City law on the subject.

Wari, the capital of Jakri, though almost if not actually as old a town as Benin City, has never had the bad reputation that the latter city has always had. I attribute this to the fact that the ladies of Warri have always been a power in the land.

Sapele is a place that has come very much into notice since the country has been under the jurisdiction of the Niger Coast Protectorate, and is without doubt one of the best stations on the Benin territory. I am glad to say that the Europeans have at last deserted to a great extent their factories at the mouth of the Benin River, and are now principally located at Sapele and Wari.

The Jakri tribe claim to be of the same race as the people of Benin City and kingdom. This I am inclined to dispute; I think they were a coast tribe like the Ijos. Tradition says that Wari was founded by people from Benin kingdom and for many years was tributary to the king of Benin, but in 1778 Wari was reported to be quite independent. They may have become almost the same

race by intermarriage with the Benin people that went to Wari; but that they were originally the same race I say no.

The religion of the Jakri tribe and the native laws and system of ordeals were, as far as I have been able to ascertain, identical with those of the Benin kingdom; with the exception of the human sacrifices and their law of inheritance which does not admit the right of primogeniture—following in this respect, the laws of the Bonny men and their neighbours. Twin children are usually killed by the Jakris, and the mother driven into the bush to die.

The Jakri tribe are, without doubt, one of the finest in the Niger Coast Protectorate; many of their present chiefs are very honest and intelligent men, also excellent traders. Their women are noted as being the finest and best looking for miles round.

The Jakri women have already made great strides towards their complete emancipation from the low state in which the women of neighbouring tribes still find themselves, many of them being very rich and great traders.

The Sobo tribe have been kept so much in the background by the Jakris that little is known about them. What little is known of them is to their credit.

We now come to the Ijo tribe, or at least, that portion of them that live within the Niger Coast Protectorate; these men are reported by some travellers to be cannibals, and a very turbulent people; this character has been given them by interested parties. Their looks are very much against them as they disfigure their faces by heavy cuts as tribal marks, and some pick up the flesh between their

eyes making a kind of ridge, that gives them a savage expression. Though I have put the limit of these people at the river Ramos, they really extend along the coast as far as the western bank of the Akassa river. They have never had a chance and, with the exception of large timber for making canoes, their country does not produce much. Though I have seen considerable numbers of rubber-producing trees in their country, I never was able to induce them to work it. No doubt they asked the advice of their Ju-Ju as to taking my advice, and he followed the usual rule laid down by the priesthood of Ju-Ju-ism, no innovations.

Whilst I was in the Ijo country I carefully studied their Ju-Ju, as I had been told they were great believers in, and practisers of Ju-Ju-ism. I found little in their system differing from that practised in most of the rivers of the Delta.

In all these practices human agency plays a very large part, and this seems to be known even to the lower orders of the people; as an instance, I must here relate an experience I once had amongst the Ijos. I had arranged with a chief living on the Bassa Creek to lend me his fastest canoe and twenty-five of his people, to take me to the Brass river; the bargain was that his canoe should be ready at Cock-Crow Peak the following morning. I was ready at the water-side by the time appointed, but only about six of the smallest boys had put in an appearance; the old chief was there in a most furious rage, sending off messengers in all directions to find the canoe boys. After about two hours' work and the expenditure of much bad language on the part of the old chief, also some hard knocks administered to the canoe boys by the men who

had been sent after them, as evidenced by the wales I saw on their backs, the canoe was at last manned, and I took my seat in it under a very good mat awning which nearly covered the canoe from end to end, and thanking my stars that now my troubles had come to an end I hoped at least for a time. I was, however, a very big bit too premature, for before the old chief would let the canoe start, he informed me he must make Ju-Ju for the safety of his canoe and the safe return of it and all his boys, to say nothing of my individual safety.

One of the first requirements of that particular Ju-Ju cost me further delay, for a bottle of gin had to be procured, and as the daily market in that town had not yet opened, and no public house had yet been established by any enterprising Ijo, it took some time to procure.

On the arrival of the article, however, my friend the old chief proceeded in a most impressive manner to repeat a short prayer, the principal portion I was able to understand and which was as follows: "I beg you, I beg you, don't capsize my canoe. If you do, don't drown any of my boys and don't do any harm to my friend the white man." This was addressed to the spirit of the water; having finished this little prayer, he next sprinkled a little gin about the bows of the canoe and in the river, afterwards taking a drink himself. He then produced a leaf with about an ounce of broken-up cooked yam mixed with a little palm oil, which he carefully fixed in the extreme foremost point of the canoe.

At last this ceremony was at an end and we started off, but alas! my troubles were only just beginning. We had been started about half an hour, and I had quietly dozed off into a pleasant sleep, when I was awakened by feeling

the canoe rolling from side to side as if we were in rough water; just then the boys all stopped pulling, and on my remonstrance they informed me Ju-Ju "no will," *id est*, that the Ju-Ju had told them they must go back. I used gentle persuasion in the form of offers of extra pay at first, then I stormed and used strong language, or at least, what little Ijo strong language I knew, but all to no avail. I then began to inquire what Ju-Ju had spoken, and they pointed out a small bird that just then flew away into the bush; it looked to me something like a kingfisher. The head boy of the canoe then explained to me that this Ju-Ju bird having spoken, *id est*, chirped on the right-hand side of the canoe, and the goat's skull hanging up to the foremost awning stanchion having fallen the same way (this ornament I had not previously noticed), signified that we must turn back. So turn back we did, though I thought at the time the boys did not want to go the journey, owing to the almost continual state of quarrelling that had been going on for years between the Ijos and the Brassmen. I was not far wrong, for when we eventually did arrive at Brass, I had to hide these Ijo people in the hold of my ship, as the very sight of a Brassman made them shiver.

The following morning the same performance was gone through; we started, and at about the same point Ju-Ju spoke again; again we returned. My old friend the chief was very sorry he said, but he could not blame his boys for acting as they had done, Ju-Ju having told them to return. He would not listen when I told him I felt confident his boys had assisted the Ju-Ju by making the canoe roll about from side to side.

However, I thought the matter over to myself during that second day, and decided I would make sure one part

of that Ju-Ju should not speak against me the next morning, and that was the goat's skull, so during that night after every Ijo was fast asleep, I visited that skull and carefully secured it to its post by a few turns of very fine fishing line in such a manner that no one could notice what I had done, if they did not specially examine it. I dare not fix it to the left, that being the favourable side, for fear of it being noticed, but I fixed it straight up and down, so that it could not demonstrate against my journey.

I retired to my sleeping quarters and slept the sleep of the just, and next morning started in the best of spirits, though continually haunted by the fear that my little stratagem might be discovered. We had got about the same distance from the town that we had on the two previous mornings when the canoe began to oscillate as usual, caused by a combined movement of all the boys in the canoe, I was perfectly convinced, for the creek we were in was as smooth as a mill pond. Many anxious glances were cast at the skull, and the canoe was made to roll more and more until the water slopped over into her, but the skull did not budge, and, strange to relate, the bird of ill omen did not show itself or chirp this morning, so the boys gave up making the canoe oscillate and commenced to paddle for all they were worth, and the following evening we arrived at my ship in Brass. We could have arrived much earlier, but the Ijos did not wish to meet with any Brassmen, so we waited until the shades of night came on, and thus passed unobserved several Brass canoes, arriving safely at my ship in time for dinner.

I carefully questioned the head boy of the Ijo boys all about this bird that had given me so much trouble. He explained to me that once having passed a certain point in

the creek, the bird not having spoken and the skull not having demonstrated either, it was quite safe to continue on our journey, conveying to me the idea that this bird was a regular inhabitant of a certain portion of the bush, which was also their sacred bush wherein the Ju-Ju priests practised their most private devotions. The same species of bird showed itself several times both on the right of us and on the left of us as we passed through other creeks on our way to Brass, but the canoe boys took no notice of it.

In dealing with the Benin Kingdom I have allowed myself somewhat to encroach upon the Royal Niger Company's territory, which commences on the left bank of the river Forcados and takes in all the rivers down to the Nun (Akassa), and the sea-shore to leeward of this river as far as a point midway between the latter river and the mouth of the Brass river, thence a straight line is drawn to a place called Idu, on the Niger River, forming the eastern boundary between the Royal Niger Company's territory and the Niger Coast Protectorate. I have not defined the western boundary between the Royal Niger Company's territory and the other portion of the Niger Coast Protectorate otherwise than stating that it commences on the seashore at the eastern point of the Forcados.

Benin Kingdom, as a kingdom, may now be numbered with the past. For years the cruelties known to be enacted in the city of Benin have been such that it was only a question of ways and means that deterred the Protectorate officials from smashing up the place several years ago.

It is a very curious trait in the character of these savage kinglets of Western Africa how little they seem

to have been impressed by the downfall of their brethren in neighbouring districts. Though they were well acquainted with all that was passing around them. Thus the fall of Ashantee in 1873 was well known to the King of Dahomey, yet he continued on his way and could not believe the French could ever upset him. Nana, the governor of the lower Benin or Jakri, could not see in the downfall of Ja Ja that the British Government were not to be trifled with by any petty king or governor of these rivers; though Nana was a most intelligent native, he had the temerity to show fight against the Protectorate officials, and of course he quickly found out his mistake, but alas! too late for his peace of mind and happiness; he is now a prisoner at large far away from his own country, stripped of all his riches and position. Here was an object lesson for Abu Bini, the King of Benin, right at his own door, every detail of which he must have heard of, or at least his Ju-Ju priests must have heard of the disaster that had happened to Nana, his satrap.

Nothing daunted Abu Bini and his Ju-Ju priests continued their evil practices; then came the frightful Benin massacre of Protectorate officials and European traders, besides a number of Jakris and Kruboys in the employment of the Protectorate.

The first shot that was fired that January morning, 1897, by the emissaries of King Abu Bini, sounded the downfall of the City of Benin and the end of all its atrocious and disgusting sacrificial rites, for scarcely three months after the punitive expedition camped in the King's Palace at old Benin.

The two expeditions that have had to be sent to Benin River within the last few years have been two unique

specimens of what British sailors and soldiers have to cope with whilst protecting British subjects and their interests, no matter where situated.

I do not suppose that there are in England to-day one hundred people who know, and can therefore appreciate at its true value, the risk that each man in those two expeditions ran. In the attack on Nana's town the British sailors had to walk through a dirty, disgusting, slimy mangrove swamp, often sinking in the mud half way up their thighs, and this in the face of a sharp musketry fire coming from unseen enemies carefully hidden away, in some cases not five yards off, in dense bush, with occasional discharges of grape and canister. But nothing stopped them, and Nana's town was soon numbered with the things that had been.

It was the same to a great extent in the attack on Benin, only varied by the swamps not being quite so bad as at Nana's town, but the distance from the water side was much farther; in the former case one might say it was only a matter of minutes once in touch with the enemy; in the attack on Benin city it was a matter of several days marching through dense bush, where an enemy could get within five yards of you without being seen, and in some places nearer. Almost constantly under fire, besides a sun beating down on you so hot that where the soil was sandy you felt the heat almost unbearable through the soles of your boots, to say nothing of the minor troubles of being very short of drinking water, and at night not being able to sleep owing to the myriads of sand-flies and mosquitoes; getting now and again a perfume wafted under your nostrils, in comparison with which a London sewer would be eau de Cologne.

I was once under fire for twelve hours against European

trained troops, so know something about a soldier's work, and for choice I would prefer a week's similar work in Europe to two hours' West African bush and swamp fighting, with its aids, fever and dysentery.

Before I quit Benin I want to mention one thing more about Ju-Ju. When the attack was made on Benin city, the first day's march had scarcely begun when two white men were killed and buried. After the column passed on, the natives came and dug the bodies up, cut their heads and hands off, and carried them up to Benin city to the Ju-Ju priests, who showed them to the king to prove to him that his Ju-Ju, managed by them, was greater than the white man's; in fact, the king, I am told, was being shown these heads and hands at the moment when the first rockets fell in Benin city. Those rockets proved to him the contrary, and he left the city quicker than he had ever done in his life before.

To point out to my readers how all the natives of the Delta believed in the power of the Benin Ju-Ju, I must tell you none of them believed the English had really captured the King until he was taken round and shown to them, the belief being that, on the approach of danger, he would be able to change himself into a bird and thus fly away and escape.

BRASS RIVER

Brass River is then the first river we have to deal with on the Niger Coast Protectorate, to the eastward of the Royal Niger Company's boundary.

The inhabitants of Brass call their country Nimbé and themselves Nimbé nungos, the latter word meaning people.

Their principal towns were Obulambri and Basambri, divided only by a narrow creek dry at low water. In each of these towns resided a king, each having jurisdiction over separate districts of the Nimbé territory; thus the King of Obulambri was supposed to look after the district on the left hand of the River Brass, his jurisdiction extending as far as the River St. Barbara. The King of Basambri's district extended from the right bank of the Brass River, westward as far as the Middleton outfalls; included in this district was the Nun mouth of the River Niger. These two kinglets had a very prosperous time during the closing days of the slave trade, as most of the contraband was carried on through the Brass and the Nun River both by Bonnymen and New Calabar men after they had signed treaties with Her Majesty's Government to discontinue the slave trade in their dominions. When eventually the trade in slaves was finally put down their prosperity was not at an end, for they went largely into the palm oil trade, and did a most prosperous trade along the banks of the Niger as far as Onitsa.

Though these two kings always objected to the white men opening up the Niger, and did their utmost to retard the first expeditions, they were not slow in demanding comey from the early traders who established factories in the Nun mouth of the Niger; this part of the Niger is also called the Akassa.

These people are a very mixed race, and to describe them as any particular tribe would be an error. I believe the original inhabitants of the mouths of these rivers were the Ijos, and that the towns of Obulambri and Bassambri were founded by some of the more adventurous spirits amongst the men from the neighbourhood of Sabogrega, a

town on the Niger; being afterwards joined by some similar adventurers from Bonny River. The three people are closely connected by family ties at this day.

As a rule these people have always had the character of being a well behaved set of men; it is a notable fact in their favour that they were the only people that, once having signed the treaty with Her Majesty's Government to put down slavery, honestly stuck to the terms of the treaty; unlike their neighbours, they did so, though they were the only people who did not receive any indemnity.

They, however, have occasionally lost their heads and gone to excesses unworthy of a people with such a good reputation as they have generally enjoyed.

Their last escapade was the attack on the factory of the Royal Niger Company at Akassa some few years ago, and for which they were duly punished; their dual mud and thatch capital was blown down, and one small town called Fishtown destroyed.

Impartial observers must have pitied these poor people driven to despair by being cut off from their trading markets by the fiscal arrangements of the Royal Niger Company. The latter I don't blame very much, they are traders; but the line drawn from Idu to a point midway between the Brass River and the Nun entrance to the Niger River, as being the boundary line for fiscal purposes between the Royal Niger Company and the Niger Coast Protectorate, was drawn by some one at Downing Street who evidently looked upon this part of the world as a cheesemonger would a cheese.

In 1830 it was at Abo on the Niger where Lander the traveller met with the Brassmen, who took him down to Obulambri, but no ship being in Brass River, they took

him and his people over to Akassa, at the Nun mouth of the Niger, to an English ship lying there. History says he was anything but well received by the captain of this vessel, and that the Brassmen did not treat him as well as they might; however, they did not eat him, as they no doubt would have done could they have looked into the future. Whatever their treatment of Lander was, it could not have been very bad, as they received some reward for what assistance they had given him some time after.

It was amongst these people that I was enabled to study more closely the inner working of the domestic slavery of this part of Western Africa, and where it was carried on with less hardship to the slaves themselves than any place else in the Delta, until the Niger Company's boundary line threw most of the labouring population on the rates, at least they would have gone on the rates if there had been any to go on, but unfortunately the municipal arrangements of these African kingdomlets had not arrived at such a pitch of civilisation; the consequence was many died from starvation, others hired themselves out as labourers, but the demand for their services was limited, as they compared badly with the fine, athletic Krumen, who monopolise all the labour in these parts. Then came the punitive expedition for the attack on Akassa that wiped off a few more of the population, so that to-day the Brassmen may be described as a vanishing people.

The various grades of the people in Brass were the kings, next came the chiefs and their sons who had by their own industry, and assisted in their first endeavours by their parents, worked themselves into a position of wealth, then came the Winna-boes, a grade mostly supplied by the favourite slave of a chief, who had been his constant

attendant for years, commencing his career by carrying his master's pocket-handkerchief and snuff-box, pockets not having yet been introduced into the native costume; after some years of this duty he would be promoted to going down to the European traders to superintend the delivery of a canoe of oil, seeing to its being tried, gauged, &c. This first duty, if properly performed, would lead to his being often sent on the same errand. This duty required a certain amount of *saves*, as the natives call intelligence, for he had to so look after his master's interests that the pull-away boys that were with him in the canoe did not secrete any few gallons of oil that there might be left over after filling up all the casks he had been sent to deliver; nor must he allow the white trader to under-gauge his master's casks by carelessness or otherwise. If he was able to do the latter part of his errand in such a diplomatic manner that he did not raise the bile of the trader, that day marked the commencement of his upward career, if he was possessed of the bump of saving. All having gone off to the satisfaction of both parties, the trader would make this boy some small present according to the number of puncheons of oil he had brought down, seldom less than a piece of cloth worth about 2s. 6d., and, in the case of canoes containing ten to fifteen puncheons, the trader would often dash him two pieces of cloth and a bunch or two of beads. This present he would, on his return to his master's house, hand over to his mother (*id est*, the woman who had taken care of him from the time when he was first bought by his Brass master). She would carefully hoard this and all subsequent bits of miscellaneous property until he had in his foster-mother's hands sufficient goods to buy an angbar of oil—a measure containing thirty gallons. Then he would

approach his master (always called "father" by his slaves) and beg permission to send his few goods to the Niger markets the next time his master had a canoe starting—which permission was always accorded. He had next to arrange terms with the head man or trader of his master's canoe as to what commission he had to get for trading off the goods in the far market. In this discussion, which may occupy many days before it is finally arranged, the foster-mother figures largely; and it depends a great deal upon her standing in the household of the chief as to the amount of commission the trade boy will demand for his services. If the foster-mother should happen to be a favourite wife of the chief, well, then things are settled very easily, the trade boy most likely saying he was quite willing to leff-em to be settled any way she liked; if, on the contrary, it was one of the poorer women of the chief's house, Mr. Trade-boy would demand at least the quarter of the trade to commence with, and end up by accepting about ar eighth. As the winnabo could easily double his property twice a year—and he was always adding to his store in his foster-mother's hands from presents received each time he went down to the white trader with his father's oil—it did not take many years for him to become a man of means, and own canoes and slaves himself. Many times have I known cases where the winnabo has repeatedly paid up the debts of his master to the white man.

According to the law of the country, the master has the right to sell the very man who is paying his debts off for him; but I must say I never heard a case of such rank ingratitude, though cases have occurred where the master has got into such low water and such desperate difficulties that his creditors under country law have seized everything

he was possessed of, including any wealthy winnaboes he might have.

Some writers have said this class could purchase their freedom; with this I don't agree. The only chance a winnabo had of getting his freedom was, supposing his master died and left no sons behind him old enough or capable enough to take the place of their father, then the winnabo might be elected to take the place of his defunct master; he would then become *ipso facto* a chief, and be reckoned a free man. If he was a man of strong character, he would hold until his death all the property of the house; but if one of the sons of his late master should grow up an intelligent man, and amass sufficient riches to gather round him some of the other chief men in the town, then the question was liable to be re-opened, and the winnabo might have to part out some of the property and the people he had received upon his appointment to the headship of the house, together with a certain sum in goods or oil, which the elders of the town would decide should represent the increment on the portion handed over. I have never known of a case where the whole of the property and people have been taken away from a winnabo in Brass; but I have known it occur in other rivers, but only for absolute misuse, misrule, and misconduct of the party.

Egbo-boes are the niggers or absolute lower rank of slaves, who are employed as pull-away boys in the oil canoes and gigs of the chiefs, and do all the menial work or hard labour of the towns that is not done by the lower ranks of the women slaves.

The lot of these egbo-boes is a very hard one at times, especially when their masters have no use for them in their oil canoes. At the best of times their masters don't provide

them with more food then is about sufficient for one good square meal a day; but, when trade is dull and they have no use for them in any way, their lot is deplorable indeed. This class has suffered terribly during the last ten years owing to the complete stoppage of the Brassmen's trade in the Niger markets.

This class had few chances of rising in the social scale, but it was from this class that sprang some of the best trade boys who took their masters' goods away up to Abo and occasionally as far as Onitsa, on the Niger.

Cases have occurred of boys from this class rising to as good a position as the more favoured winnaboes; but for this they have had to thank some white trader, who has taken a fancy to here and there one of them, and getting his master to lend him to him as a cabin boy—a position generally sought after by the sons of chiefs, so as to learn "white man's mouth," otherwise English.

The succession laws are similar to those of the other Coast tribes one meets with in the Delta, but to understand them it requires some little explanation. A tribe is composed of a king and a number of chiefs. Each chief has a number of petty chiefs under him. Perhaps a better definition for the latter would be, a number of men who own a few slaves and a few canoes of their own, and do an independent trade with the white men, but who pay to their chiefs a tribute of from 20 to 25 per cent. on their trade with the white man. In many cases the white man stops this tribute from the petty chiefs and holds it on behalf of the chief. This collection of petty chiefs with their chief forms what in Coast parlance is denominated a House.

The House may own a portion of the principal town, say Obulambri, and also a portion in any of the small towns

in the neighbouring creeks, and it may own here and there isolated pieces of ground where some petty chief has squatted and made a clearance either as a farm or to place a few of his family there as fishermen ; in the same way the chief of the house may have squatted on various plots of ground in any part of the district admitted by the neighbouring tribes to belong to his tribe. All these parcels and portions of land belong in common to the House—that is, supposing a petty chief having a farm in any part of the district was to die leaving no male heirs and no one fit to take his place, the chief as head of the house would take possession, but would most likely leave the slaves of the dead man undisturbed in charge of the farm they had been working on, only expecting them to deliver him a portion of the produce equivalent to what they had been in the habit of delivering to their late master, who was a petty chief of the house.

The head of the house would have the right of disposal of all the dead man's wives, generally speaking the younger ones would be taken by the chief, the others he would dispose of amongst his petty chiefs ; if, as generally happens, there were a few aged ones amongst them for whom there was no demand he would take them into his own establishment and see they were provided for.

As a matter of fact, all the people belonging to a defunct petty chief become the property of the head of the house under any circumstances ; but if the defunct had left any man capable of succeeding him, the head chief would allow this man to succeed without interfering with him in any way, provided he never had had the misfortune to raise the chief's bile ; in the latter case, if the chief was a very powerful chief, whose actions no one dare question, the chances

are that he would either be suppressed or have to go to Long Ju-Ju to prosecute his claim, the expenses of which journey would most likely eat up the whole of the inheritance, or at least cripple him for life as far as his commercial transactions were concerned. It is of course to the interest of the head of a house to surround himself with as many petty chiefs as he possibly can, as their success in trade, and in amassing riches whether in slaves or goods, always benefits him; even in those rivers where no heavy "topside" is paid to the head of the house by the white traders, the small men or petty chiefs are called upon from time to time to help to uphold the dignity of the head chief, either by voluntary offerings or forced payments. Public opinion has a good deal to say on the subject of succession; and though a chief may be so powerful during his lifetime that he may ride roughshod over custom or public opinion, after his death his successor may find so many cases of malversation brought against the late chief by people who would not have dared to open their mouths during the late chief's lifetime, that by the time they are all settled he finds that a chief's life is not a happy one at all times. Claims of various kinds may be brought up during the lifetime of a chief, and three or four of his successors may have the same claim brought against them, each party may think he has settled the matter for ever; but unless he has taken worst, the descendants of the original claimants will keep attacking each successor until they strike one who is not strong enough to hold his own against them, and they succeed in getting their claim settled. This settlement does not interfere with the losing side turning round and becoming the claimants in their turn. Some of these family disputes are very curious; take for instance a case

of a claim for five female slaves that may have been wrongfully taken possession of by some former chief of a house, this case perhaps is kept warm, waiting the right moment to put it forward, for thirty years, the claim then becomes not only for the original five women, but for their children's children and so on.

RELIGION

The Brass natives to-day are divided into two camps as far as religion is concerned: the missionary would no doubt say the greater number of them are Christians, the ordinary observer would make exactly the opposite observation, and judging from what we know has taken place in their towns within the last few years, I am afraid the latter would be right.

The Church Missionary Society started a mission here in 1868; it is still working under another name, and is under the superintendence of the Rev. Archdeacon Crowther, a son of the late Bishop Crowther.

Their success, as far as numbers of attendants at church, has been very considerable; and I have known cases amongst the women who were thoroughly imbued with the Christian religion, and acted up to its teaching as conscientiously as their white sisters; these however are few.

With regard to the men converts I have not met with one of whom I could speak in the same terms as I have done of the women.

Whilst fully recognising the efforts that the missionaries have put forth in this part of the world, I regret I can't bear witness to any great good they have done.

His mission has been worked on the usual lines that

English missions have been worked in the past, so I must attribute any want of success here as much to the system as anything.

One of the great obstacles to the spread of Christianity in these parts is in my opinion the custom of polygamy, together with which are mixed up certain domestic customs that are much more difficult to eradicate than the teachings of Ju-Ju, and require a special mission for them alone.

Almost equal to the above as an obstacle in the way of Christianity is what is called domestic slavery; Europeans who have visited Western Africa speak of this as a kind of slavery wherein there is no hardship for the slave; they point to cases where slaves have risen to be kings and chiefs, and many others who have been able to arrive at the position of petty chief in some big man's house. I grant all this, but all these people forget to mention that until these slaves are chiefs they are not safe; that any grade less than that of a chief that a slave may arrive to does not secure him from being sold if his master so wished.

Further, domestic slavery gives a chief power of life and death over his slave; and how often have I known cases where promising young slaves have done something to vex their chief their heads have paid the penalty, though these young men had already amassed some wealth, having also several wives and children.

People who condone domestic slavery, and I have heard many kindly-hearted people do so, forget that however mild the slavery of the domestic slave is on the coast, even under the mildest native it is still slavery; further, these slaves are not made out of wood, they are flesh and blood, they in their own country have had fathers and mothers. During

my lengthened stay on the coast of Africa I never questioned a slave about his or her own country that I did not find they much preferred their own country far away in the interior to their new home. Some have told me that they had been travelling upwards of two months and had been handed from one slave dealer to another, in some cases changing their owner three or four times before reaching the coast. On questioning them how they became slaves, I have only been told by one that her father sold her because he was in debt; several times I have been told that their elder brothers have sold them, but these cases would not represent one per cent. of the slaves I have questioned; the almost general reply I have received has been that they had been stolen when they had gone to fetch water from the river or the spring, as the case might be, or while they have been straying a little in the bush paths between their village and another. Sometimes they would describe how the slave-catchers had enticed them into the bush by showing them some gaudy piece of cloth or offered them a few beads or negro bells, others had been captured in some raid by one town or village on another.

Therefore domestic slavery in its effect on the interior tribes is doing very near the same amount of harm now that it did in days gone by. It keeps up a constant fear of strangers, and causes terrible feuds between the villages in the interior.

What is the use of all the missionaries' teaching to the young girl slaves so long as they are only chattels, and are forced to do the bidding of their masters or mistresses, however degrading or filthy that bidding may be?

The Ju-Juism of Brass is a sturdy plant, that takes a great deal of uprooting. A few years ago a casual observer

would have been inclined to say the missionaries are making giant strides amongst these people. I remember, as evidence of how keenly these people seemed to take to Christianity up to a certain point, a little anecdote that the late Bishop Crowther once told me about the Brass men. I think it must have been a very few years before his death. I saw the worthy bishop staggering along my wharf with an old rice bag full of some heavy articles. On arriving on my verandah he threw the bag down, and after passing the usual compliments, he said, "You can't guess what I have got in that bag." I replied I was only good at guessing the contents of a bag when the bag was opened; but judging from the weight and the peculiar lumpy look of the outside of the bag, I should be inclined to guess yams. "Had he brought me a present of yams?" I continued. "No," he replied; "the contents of that bag are my new church seats in the town of Nimbé; the church was only finished during the week, and I decided to hold a service in it on Sunday last; and, do you believe me, those logs of wood are a sample of all we had for seats for most part of the congregation! I have therefore brought them down to show you white gentlemen our poverty, and to beg some planks to make forms for the church." I promised to assist him, and he left, carefully walking off with his bag of fire-wood, for that was all it was, cut in lengths of about fifteen inches, and about four inches in diameter. Here ends my anecdote, so far as the bishop was concerned, for he never came back to claim the fulfilment of my promise; but later on one of my clerks reported to me that there had been a great run on inch planks during the week, and that the purchasers were mostly women, and the poorest natives in the place. This fact, coupled with the

fact that the bishop never came back for the planks he had begged of me, caused me to make some inquiries, and I found that the church had been plentifully supplied with benches by the poorer portion of the congregation.

Yet how many of these earnest people could one guarantee to have completely cast out all their belief in Ju-Juism? If I were put upon my oath to answer truthfully according to my own individual belief, I am afraid my answer would be *not one.*

What an awful injustice the missionary preaches in the estimation of the average native woman, when he advises the native of West Africa to put away all his wives but one. Supposing, for instance, it is the case of a big chief with a moderate number of wives, say only twenty or thirty, he may have had children by all of them, or he may have had children by a half dozen of them,—what is to become of those wives he discards? are they to be condemned to single blessedness for the remainder of their days? Native custom or etiquette would not allow these women to marry the other men in the chief's house; they can't marry into other houses, because they would find the same condition of things there as in their own husband's house, always supposing Christianity was becoming general. These difficulties in the way of the missionary are the Ju-Ju priests' levers, which they know well how to use against Christianity, and which accounts for the frequent slide back to Ju-Juism, and in some cases cannibalism of otherwise apparently semi-civilized Africans.

The Pagan portion of the inhabitants of the Brass district have still their old belief in the Ju-Ju priests and animal worship.

The python is the Brass natives' titular guardian angel. So great was the veneration of this Ju-Ju snake in former times, that the native kings would sign no treaties with her Britannic Majesty's Government that did not include a clause subjecting any European to a heavy fine for killing or molesting in any way this hideous reptile. When one appeared in any European's compound, the latter was bound to send for the nearest Ju-Ju priest to come and remove it, for which service the priest expected a dash, *id est*, a present; if he did not get it, the chances were the priest would take good care to see that that European found more pythons visited him than his neighbours; and as a rule these snakes were not found until they had made a good meal of one of the white man's goats or turkeys, it came cheaper in the long run to make the usual present.

It is now some twenty years ago that the then agent of Messrs. Hatton and Cookson in Brass River found a large python in his house, and killed it. This coming to the ears of the natives and the Ju-Ju priests, caused no little excitement; the latter saw their opportunity, worked up the people to a state of frenzy, and eventually led them in an attack on the factory of Messrs. Hatton and Cookson, seized the agent and dragged him out of his house on to the beach, tied him up by his thumbs, each Ju-Ju priest present spat in his mouth, afterwards they stripped him naked and otherwise ill treated him, besides breaking into his store and robbing him of twenty pounds worth of goods. The British Consul was appealed to for redress, and upon his next visit to the river inquired into the case, but, *mirabile dictu*, decided that he was unable to afford the agent any redress, as he had brought the punishment on himself. I don't mention the name of this Consul, as

it would be a pity to hand down to posterity the fact that England was ever represented by such an idiot.

Besides the python the Brass men had several other secondary Ju-Jus; amongst others may be mentioned the grey and white kingfisher, also another small bird like a water-wagtail, besides which, in common with their neighbours, they believed in a spirit of the water who was supposed to dwell down by the Bar, and to which they occasionally made offerings in the shape of a young slave-girl of the lightest complexion they could buy.

The burial customs of this people differed little from others in the Niger Delta, but as I was present at the burial of two of their kings—viz. King Keya and King Arishima, at which I saw identically the same ceremonial take place, I will describe what I saw as far as my memory will serve me, for the last of these took place about thirty years ago.

The grave in this instance was not dug in a house, but on a piece of open ground close to the king's house, but was afterwards roofed over and joined on to the king's houses. The size of the grave was about fourteen by twelve feet, and about eight feet deep. At the end where the defunct's head would be, was a small table with a cloth laid over it, upon this were several bottles of different liquors, a large piece of cooked salt beef and sundry other cooked meats, ship's biscuits, &c. The ceiling of this chamber was supported by stout beams being laid across the opening, upon which would be placed planks after the body had been lowered into position, then the whole would be covered over with a part of the clay that had been taken out of the hole, the rest of the clay being afterwards used to form the walls of the house, that was eventually constructed over

the grave; a small round hole about three inches in diameter being made in the ceiling of the grave, apparently about over the place where the head of the corpse would lay. Down this would be poured palm wine and spirits on the aniversaries of the king's death, by his successor and by the Ju-Ju priests. This part of the ceremony would be called "making his father," if it was a son who succeeded; if it was not a son, he would describe it as "making his big father"; though he was perhaps no blood relation at all.

Previous to the burial the body of the king lay in state for two days in a small hut scarcely five feet high, with very open trellis work sides. I believe they would have kept the body unburied longer if they could have done so, but at the end of the second day his Highness commenced to be very objectionable. The king's body was dressed for this ceremony in his most expensive robes, having round the neck several necklaces of valuable coral, to which his chiefs would add a string more or less valuable according to their means, as they arrived for the final ceremony. The Europeans were expected to contribute something towards the funeral expenses, which contribution generally consisted of a cask of beef, a barrel of rum, a hundredweight of ship's biscuits, and from twenty to thirty pieces of cloth. Even in this there was a certain amount of rivalry shown by the Europeans, to their loss and the natives' gain. One knowing trader amongst them on this occasion had just received a consignment of imitation coral, an article at that time quite unknown in the river, either to European trader or to natives; so he decided to place one of these strings of imitation coral round the king's neck himself, and thus create a great sensation, for had it been real coral its value would have been one hundred pounds. He had,

however, not counted on the king's very objectionable state, and when he proceeded to place his offering round the king's neck, he nearly came to grief, and did not seem quite himself until he had had a good stiff glass of brandy and water. The news spread like wildfire of this man's munificence, and soon the principal chiefs waited upon him to thank him for his present to their dead king; the other Europeans were green with jealousy, though each had in his turn tried to outdo his neighbour; unfortunately, there was a Scotchman there "takin' notes," and faith he guessed a ruse, but he was a good fellow and friend of the donor, and kept the secret for some years, and did not tell the tale until it could do his friend no harm.

The cannons had been going off at intervals for the last two days. Towards ten o'clock of the second night after death the king was placed in a very open-work wicker casket, and carried shoulder high round the town, and then finally deposited in his grave. During this time the cannons were being continually fired off, and individuals were assisting in the din by firing off the ordinary trade gun. I and another European concealed ourselves near the grave, and carefully watched all night to see if they sacrificed any slaves on the king's grave, or put any poor creatures down into the grave to die a lingering death; but we saw nothing of this done, though we had been informed that no king or chief of Brass was ever buried without some of his slaves being sent with him into the next world; as our informant explained, how would they know he had been a big man in this life if he did not go accompanied by some of his niggers into the next?

The firing of cannon is kept up at intervals for an indefinite number of days after the final interment; but there

is no hard and fast rule as to its duration as far as I have been able to ascertain, and I think myself it is ruled by the greater or less liberality of the successors, who are the ones who have to pay for the gunpowder.

Amongst other customs that are common to all these rivers and this river is the killing of twin children; but since the mission has been established here the missionaries have done their utmost to wean the people from this remnant of savagery.

A curious custom that I have heard of in most of these rivers is the throwing into the bush, to be devoured by the wild beasts, any children that may be born with their front teeth cut. I found this custom in Brass, but with an exception, *id est*, I knew a pilot in Twon Town who had had the misfortune to be born with his upper front teeth through; whether it was because it was only the upper teeth that were through, or whether it was that the law is not so strictly carried out in the case of a male, I was never able to make sure of; however, he had been allowed to live, but it appears in his case some part of the law had to be carried out at his death, viz. he was not allowed to be buried, but was thrown into the bush, to fall a prey to the wild beasts, and any property he might die possessed of could not be inherited by any one, but must be dissipated or thrown into the bush to rot. I believe the Venerable Archdeacon Crowther has been instrumental in saving several of these kind of children in Bonny.

The women of Brass are, like their sisters in Benin river, moving on towards women's rights; for though they have been for many generations the hewers of wood and drawers of water, and made to do most of the hard work of the country, they had commenced some years ago to enjoy

more freedom than their sisters in the leeward rivers. They still do most of the fishing, and the fishing girls of Twon Town used to present a pretty sight as some fifteen or twenty of their tiny canoes used to sweep past the European factories, each canoe propelled by two or three graceful, laughing, chattering girls; with them would generally be seen a canoe or two paddled by some dames of a maturer age. Though *passée* as far as their looks were concerned, they could still ply their paddle as well as the best amongst the younger ones, as they forced their frail canoes through water to some favourite quiet blind creek where the current-less water allowed them to use their preparation[1] for stupefying the fish, and in little over three hours you might see them come paddling back, each tiny canoe with from fifty to a hundred small grey mullet, sometimes with more and occasionally with a few small river soles.

The Brass man, like his neighbours, had his public Ju-Ju house as well as his private little Ju-Ju chamber, the latter was to be found in any Brass man's establishment which boasted of more than one room; those who could not afford a separate chamber used to devote a corner of their own room, where might be seen sundry odds and ends bespattered with some yellow clay, and occasionally a white fowl hung by the leg to remain there and die of starvation and drop gradually to pieces as it decomposed.

The public Ju-Ju house at Obulambri was not a very pretentious affair; it consisted of a native hut of wattle and daub, the walls not being carried more than half way up to the eaves, roofed with palm mats; in the centre was an iron

[1] This preparation is made from the pericarp of the Raphia Vinifera pounded up into a pulplike mass, which they mix in the water in their canoes and then bale out into the water in the creek.

staff about five feet high, surrounded by eight bent spear heads; this was called a tokoi, at the foot of it was a hole about three inches in diameter, down which the Ju-Ju priests would pour libations of tombo or palm wine, as a sacrifice to the Ju-Ju. I was informed that this Ju-Ju house was built over the grave of the original founder of Obu-lambri town. Behind the tokoi, on a kind of altar raised about eighteen inches from the ground, were displayed about a dozen human skulls; at the time I visited it the Ju-Ju man explained to me that the greater part of these had belonged to New Calabar prisoners taken in their last war with those people; besides the skulls were sundry odds and ends of native pottery, as also a few bowls and jugs of European manufacture. What part this pottery played in their devotions I could never get a Ju-Ju man to explain, some of them appeared to have held human blood. Stacked up in one corner were a few human bones, principally thigh and shin bones.

The Brassmen do not often sacrifice human beings to their Ju-Jus, except in time of war, when all prisoners without exception were sacrificed.

Their Ju-Ju snake occasionally secured a small child by crawling unobserved into a house when the elders were absent or asleep. I once was passing through a small fishing village in the St. Nicholas river, when most of the inhabitants were away fishing, and hearing terrible screams went to see what was the cause of the trouble, and found several women wringing their hands and running to and fro in front of a small hut. For several minutes I could not get them to tell me what was the cause of their trouble; at last one of them trembling, with the most abject fear and quite unable to speak, pointed to the door of the hut. I

went and looked in, but it was so dark I could see nothing at first, so stepped inside; when, getting accustomed to the semi-darkness, I saw a large python, some ten or twelve feet long, hanging from the ridge pole of the hut immediately over a child about two years old that was calmly sleeping. To snatch up the child and walk out was the work of a moment. I then found that the woman who had pointed to the door of the hut was the mother of the child—her gratitude to me for delivering her child from certain death can be more easily imagined than described. Upon asking why she had not acted as I had done, she replied she dare not have interfered with the snake in the way I had done. I afterwards asked several of the more intelligent natives of Brass if the Ju-Ju law did not allow a mother to save her child in such a case. Some said she was a fool woman, and that she could have taken her child away the moment she saw it in danger; but others said had she done so, she would have been liable to be killed herself or pay a heavy fine to the Ju-Ju priests; and I am inclined to believe the latter version to be correct.[1]

Amongst other curious customs these people make use of the feather ordeal, to find out robbery, witchcraft, and adultery, &c. In this ordeal it rests a great deal with the Ju-Ju man who performs it whether it proves the party guilty or not. This ordeal is performed as follows:—The Ju-Ju man takes a feather from the underpart of a fowl's wing, making choice of a stronger or weaker one, according

[1] One good thing the missionaries have done since they have been in Brass, and that is, that, of persuading the natives, or at least the greater part of them, to give up the worship of this snake; and this part must have included the most influential portion of Brass society, for since about the year 1884 the Ju-Ju snake is killed wherever seen without any disastrous consequences to the killer.

to how he intends the ordeal shall demonstrate, then, drawing the tongue of the accused as far out of his mouth as he can, forces the quill of the feather through from the upper side and draws it out by grasping the point of the feather from the under side of the tongue; if the feather is unbroken the accused person is proved guilty, if on the contrary the feather breaks in the attempt to pass it through the tongue it proves the innocence of the person. It may be seen from this description how very easy it was to prove a person innocent, the mere fact of the feather breaking in the attempt to push it through the tongue being sufficient; thus, when suitably approached, the Ju-Ju man could not only prove a person's innocence, but also save him any inconvenience in eating his mess of foo foo and palaver sauce that evening.

NEW CALABAR

The intervening rivers between the Brass and New Calabar Rivers are the St. Nicholas, the St. Barbara, the St. Bartholomew, and the Sombrero; the influence of the king of New Calabar may be said to commence at the St. Bartholomew River, extending inland to about five or ten miles beyond the town of Bugama. The lower parts of the St. Bartholomew and the numerous creeks running between that river and New Calabar are mostly inhabited by fishermen and their families, their towns and villages being without exception the most squalid and dirty of any to be found in the Delta. Beyond fishing, the males seem to do little else than sleep; occasionally the men assist their wives and children in making palm-leaf mats, used generally all over the Delta in place of thatch—not a very profitable employment, as the demand varies considerably

according to the seasons. After a very rough and boisterous rainy season, the price may be two shillings and sixpence, or its equivalent, for four hundred of these mats, each mat being a little over two feet in length, but falling in bad times to two shillings and sixpence for five to six hundred. A roof made with these mats threefold thick will last for three years.

These people call themselves Calabar men simply because they live within the influence of the Calabarese. In the upper part of these small rivers, about a day's journey by canoe from the mouth of St. Bartholomew, is the chief town of a small tribe of people called the Billa tribe, connected by marriage with the Bonny men, several of the kings of Bonny having married Billa women. These people are producers in a small way of palm-oil, and though they are located so close to the New Calabar people, prefer to sell their produce to the Bonny men, who send their canoes over to the Billa country to fetch the oil, the latter people not having canoes large enough for carrying the large puncheons which the Bonny men send over to collect their produce in.

The New Calabar men are now split up into three towns called Bugama, where the king lives; Abonema, of which Bob Manuel is the principal chief; and Backana, where the Barboy House reside. Besides they have numerous small towns scattered about in the network of creeks connecting the Calabar River with the Sombrero River. Previous to 1880 these people all dwelt together in one large town on the right bank of the Calabar River, nearly opposite to where the creek, now called the Cawthorne Channel,[1] branches off from the main river.

[1] As an evidence of how secret the natives of these parts have always tried to keep, and have to a great extent kept, the knowledge of the

For some few years previous the chief of the Barboy House, Will Braid, had incurred the displeasure of the Amachree house, which was the king's house. For certain private reasons the king, with whom sided most of the

various creeks from the white men since the abolition of the slave trade, I may point to this creek, which is clearly marked and the soundings given in the old charts, *circa* 1698, but was quite unknown to the present generation of traders, until Capt. Cawthorne, of the African Steamship Company rediscovered it about 1882-4. I well remember this creek being carefully described to me by Bonny men in 1862 as the haunt of lawless outcasts from Bonny and the surrounding countries, cannibals and pirates. About this time I was stationed in New Calabar, and in roaming about the creeks looking for something to shoot, I came across this beautiful wide creek and followed it until I sighted Breaker Island; but being only in a small shooting canoe I was forced to turn back the way I had come. The next morning I was favoured by the visit of King Amachree, the father of the present king, who said he had heard from his people that I had been down this creek, and he had come to warn me of the danger I ran in visiting that creek, giving me the same description that the Bonny men had done some months earlier. I laughed and told him I had heard the same yarn from the Bonny men. Later in the same year I mentioned my visit to an old freeman in Bonny, named Bess Pepple. He being a little inebriated at the time, let his tongue wag freely, and informed me that it was a creek often used by the slavers during the time the preventive squadron was on the coast, to take in their cargo. In one instance that he remembered he said there were five slavers up that creek when two of Her Majesty's gunboats were in Bonny, about the year 1837. About this time (1862) a mate of a ship who was in charge of a small schooner running between New Calabar and Bonny was forced by stress of weather to anchor inside the seaward mouth of this creek, and was attacked during the night by some natives, carried on shore, tied to a tree and flogged, the cargo of the schooner plundered, and the Kroomen also flogged. Complaint being made to the kings of New Calabar and Bonny, they both replied with the same tale: "We no done tell you we no fit be responsible for dem men who live for dem creek; he be dam pirate." This was true they had, but the mate swore he recognised some Bonny men amongst his assailants.

other chiefs, had decided to break down the Barboy house, which had been a very powerful house in days anterior to the present king's father, and tradition says that the Barboys had some right to be the reigning house. Will Braid, the head of the house at this time, had by his industry and honourable conduct raised the position of the house to very near its former influence. This was one of the private reasons that caused the king to look on him with disfavour.

When one of these West African kinglets decides that one of their chiefs is getting too rich, and by that means too powerful, he calls his more immediate supporters together, and they discuss the means that are to be used to compass the doomed one's fall. If he be a man of mettle, with many sub-chiefs and aspiring trade boys, the system resorted to is to trump up charges against him of breaches of agreement as to prices paid by him or his people in the Ibo markets for produce, and fine him heavily. If he pays without murmur, they leave him alone for a time; but very soon another case is brought against him either on the same lines or for some breach of native etiquette, such as sending his people into some market to trade where, perchance, he has been sending his people for years; but the king and his friendly chiefs dish up some old custom, long allowed to drop in abeyance, by which his house was debarred from trading in that particular market. The plea of long usance would avail him little; another fine would be imposed. This injustice would generally have the effect desired, the doomed one would refuse to pay, then down the king would come on him for disregarding the orders of himself and chiefs; fine would follow fine, until the man lost his head and did some rash act, which assisted his enemies to more certainly

compass his ruin. Or he does what I have seen a persecuted chief do in these rivers on more than one occasion: that is, he gathers all his wives and children about him, together with his most trusted followers and slaves, also any of his family who are willing to follow him into the next world, lays a double tier of kegs of gunpowder on the floor of the principal room in his dwelling-house and knocks in the heads of the top tier of kegs. Placing all his people on this funeral pile, he seats himself in the middle with a fire-stick grasped in his hand, then sends a message to the king and chiefs to come and fetch the fines they have imposed on him. The king and chiefs generally shrewdly guessed what this message meant, and took good care not to get too near, stopping at a convenient distance to parley with him by means of messengers. The victim finding there was no chance of blowing up his enemies along with himself and people, would plunge the fire-stick into the nearest keg, and the next moment the air would be filled with the shattered remains of himself and his not unwilling companions.

Having digressed somewhat to explain how chiefs are undone, I must continue my account of the New Calabar people and the cause of their deserting their original town. This was brought about by Will Braid, on whom the squeezing operation had been some time at work. He turned at bay and defied the king and chiefs; this led to a civil war, in which he was getting the worst of the game, so one dark night he quietly slipped away with most of his retainers and took refuge in Bonny. This led to complications, for Bonny espoused the cause of W. Braid and declared war against New Calabar; thus in place of suppressing Will Braid they came near to being suppressed themselves, the Bonny men very pluckily establishing themselves opposite New Calabar

town, where they threw up a sand battery, in which they placed several rifled cannon, and did considerable damage to the New Calabar town, from whence a feeble return fire was kept up for several days, during which time the Calabar men occupied themselves in placing their valuables and people in security, and eventually, unknown to the Bonny men, clearing out all their war canoes and fighting men through creeks at the back of their town to the almost inaccessible positions of Bugama and Abonema. The Bonny men continued the bombardment, but finding there was no reply from the town, despatched, during the night, some scouts to find out what was the position of things in the New Calabar town; on their return they reported the town deserted. The Bonny men lost no time in following the New Calabar men to their new position, but found Bugama inaccessible, so turned their attention to Abonema, which they very pluckily assaulted, but were repulsed with considerable loss, losing one of their best war canoes, in which was a fine rifled cannon; at the same time the Bonny chief, Waribo, who had most energetically led the assault, barely escaped with his life, as he was in the war canoe that had been sunk by the New Calabar men. This victory was very pluckily gained by Chief Bob Manuel and his people, who were greatly assisted in the defence of their position by having been supplied at an opportune moment with a mitrailleuse by one of the European traders in the New Calabar river. This defeat somewhat cooled the courage of the Bonny men; the war however continued to be carried on in a desultory manner for several months, until both sides were tired of the game, and at last all the questions in dispute between the king and chiefs of New Calabar and Will Braid, and the matters in dispute between the New

Calabar men and the Bonny men were by mutual agreement left to the arbitration of the king and chiefs of Okrika, and King Ja Ja and the chiefs of Opobo. The arbitrators met on board one of Her Majesty's vessels in Bonny River in 1881, King Ja Ja being represented by Chief Cookey Gam and several other chiefs, the king and chiefs of Okrika being in full force. The result of the arbitration did not give complete satisfaction to any party, owing to the advice of Ja Ja on the affair not having been listened to in its entirety. However, W. Braid returned to New Calabar territory and founded a town of his own, assisted by his very faithful Chief Yellow of Young Town. Thus ended the last war between the old rivals Bonny and New Calabar. It is on record that these two countries had been scarcely ever at peace for any length of time since New Calabar was first founded some two hundred and fifty years ago, when, tradition says, one of the Ephraim Duke family left Old Calabar and settled at the spot from whence they retired in 1880.

Old traders I met with in the early sixties informed me that during one of these wars, between the years 1820 and 1830, the king Pepple, then reigning in Bonny succeeded in capturing the king of Calabar of that time (the grandfather of the last king Amachree), and to celebrate his victory and royal capture, made a great feast to which he invited all the European slave traders then in his country. The feast was a right royal one, the king had a special dish prepared for himself which was nothing less than the heart of his royal captive, torn from his scarcely lifeless body.

The New Calabar people, though said to be descended from the Old Calabar race, have not retained any of the characteristics of the latter, neither in their language nor

dress, nor have they retained the elaborate form of secret society or native freemasonry peculiar to the Efik[1] race called Egbo.

Their religion is the same animistic form of Ju-Juism and belief in the oracle they call Long Ju-Ju situated in the vicinity of Bende in the hinterland of Opobo, common to all the inhabitants of the Delta; besides the latter, they are believers in the power of a Ju-Ju in some mystic grove in the Oru country. The peculiar test at this latter place is said to have been established by some ancient dame having uttered some fearful curse or wish at the spot where the ordeal is administered. The descriptions of this are rather vague, as no one who has undergone it has ever been known to return, that is, if he has really seen the oracle work, for if it works it is a sign of his guilt and drowns him; if he is innocent it does not work, so on his return he is not in a position to describe it. But the proprietors of this interesting Ju-Ju have for very many years found that a nigger fetches a better price alive than when turned into butcher's meat; they have therefore been in the habit of selling the guilty victim into slavery in as far distant a country as possible; but occasionally one of these men have drifted down to the coast again, but dare not return to his own country as no one would believe he was anything else but a spirit. One of these "spirits" I had the pleasure to interview on one occasion, and he told me that the only ones who were actually drowned were the old or unsaleable men; when two men went to this Ju-Ju or ordeal well, to decide some vital question between them, the party taking

[1] Efik race—the inhabitants of Old Calabar, said to have come from the Ibibio country, a district lying between Kwo country and the Cross River.

best would want to see his dead or drowned opponent; for this purpose the Ju-Ju priests always kept a few of the old and decrepit votaries on hand to be drowned as required, but the opponent was never allowed to stand by and see the oracle work, but was taken up to the well and allowed to see a dead body lying at the bottom, and after he had glanced in and satisfied himself there was a drowned person there, he would be hurried away by the Ju-Ju priests and their assistants. That these priests had the supernatural power to make the water rise up in the well, this "spirit" thoroughly believed, and when I offered the suggestion of an underground water supply brought from some higher elevation, he scouted the idea and gave me his private opinion thus: "White man he no be fit savey all dem debly ting Ju-Ju priest fit to do; he fit to change man him face so him own mudder no fit savey him; he fit make dem tree he live for water side, bob him head down and drink water all same man; he fit make himself alsame bird and fly away; you fit to look him lib for one place and you keep you eye for him, he gone, you no fit see him when he go."

Which little speech turned into ordinary English meant to say that white people could not understand the devilish tricks the Ju-Ju priests were able to do, they could so disguise a person that his own mother would not recognise him, this without the assistance of any make-up but simply from their devilish science; that they could cause a tree on the banks of a river to bend its stem and imbibe water through its topmost branches; that they could change themselves into birds and fly away; and lastly, that they could make themselves invisible before your eyes and so suddenly that you could not tell when they had done so.

I asked him why the Ju-Ju man had not altered him, so that when he sold him it would be impossible for any one who had known him in his own country ever to recognise him if they saw him in another. His reply was: "Ju-Ju man savey them man what believe in Ju-Ju no will believe me dem time I go tell dem I be dem Osūkū of Young Town come back from Long Ju-Ju. He savey all man go run away from me in my own country." "Well," I said, "how about the people amongst whom you now are? they believe in very nearly the same Ju-Jus that your own people do, what do they say about you?" "Oh! they say I be silly fellow and no savey I done die one time, and been born again in some other country." I then asked him how they accounted for his knowing about the people who were still alive in his own country and to be able to talk about matters which had taken place there within the previous five or six years. Then I got the word the inquirer in this part of the world generally gets when he wishes to dive into the inner circles of native occultism, viz., "Anemia," which means "I don't know."

The chiefs in New Calabar in the days of the last king's father were an extremely fine body of men, both physically and commercially; the latter quality they owed to the strong hand the king kept over them, and the excellent law he inaugurated when he became the king with regard to trade, viz., that no New Calabar chief or other native was allowed to take any goods on credit from the Europeans. His power was absolute, and considering that he inherited his father's place at a time when the country was in the throes of war with Bonny—his father being the king captured by the king of Bonny

mentioned previously—the success of his rule was wonderful, for he pulled his country together and carried on the war with such ability that Bonny ultimately was glad to come to terms; a peace was agreed upon which lasted many years, until the old king of Bonny died, and his son wishing to emulate his father re-opened hostilities, but with such ill-success and loss to his country that it eventually led to his being deposed and exiled from his country for some years.

The New Calabar people are and have been always great believers in Ju-Juism, the head Ju-Ju priest being styled the Ju-Ju king and ranking higher than the king in any matters relating to purely native affairs.

The shark is their principal animal deity, to which they were in the habit of sacrificing a light-coloured child every seven years. This used to be openly and ostentatiously performed by a procession of a half-dozen large canoes being formed up at the town of New Calabar, each canoe being manned by forty to fifty paddlers; in the midships of each canoe a deck some ten feet long would be placed on which the Ju-Ju priests and a number of the younger chiefs and the grown-up sons of the chief men would huddle together and keep up a continuous howling and dancing, accompanied with the waving of their hands and handkerchiefs, until they arrived down near the mouth of the river. When the water began to be so rough that the singers and dancers could not keep their feet, it was a sign the offering must be cast into the sea; the Ju-Ju men and their assistants all supplicating their friend the shark to intercede with the Spirit of the Water to keep open the entrance to their river and cause plenty of ships to come to their river to trade.

Their Ju-Ju house in their original town was a much larger and more pretentious edifice than that of Bonny, garnished with human and goats' skulls in a somewhat similar manner, unlike the Bonny Ju-Ju house in the fact that it was roofed over, the eaves of which were brought down almost to the ground, thus excluding the light and prying eyes at the same time; at either side of the main entrance, extending some few feet from the eaves, was a miscellaneous collection of iron three-legged pots, various plates, bowls and dishes of Staffordshire make, all of which had some flower pattern on them, hence were Ju-Ju and not available for use or trade — the old-fashioned lustre jug, being also Ju-Ju, was only to be seen in the Ju-Ju house, though a great favourite in Bonny and Brass as a trade article—at this time all printed goods or cloth with a flower or leaf pattern on them were Ju-Ju. Any goods of these kinds falling into the hands of a true believer had to be presented to the Ju-Ju house. As traders took good care not to import any such goods, people often wondered where all these things came from. Had they arrived shortly after a vessel bound to some other port had had the misfortune to be wrecked off New Calabar, they would have solved the problem at once, for anything picked up from a wreck which is Ju-Ju has to be carried off at once to the Ju-Ju house. I remember on one occasion visiting this Ju-Ju house just after a large ship called the *Clan Gregor* bound into Bonny had been wrecked off New Calabar, and found the Ju-Ju house decked both inside and out with yards of coloured cottons from roof to floor; but the Ju-Ju priests did not get all their rights, for some tricky natives on salving a bale of goods would carefully slit the bale just sufficiently

to see what were the goods inside, and should they be Ju-Ju would not open them, but take them to their particular friend amongst the European traders, and get him to send them away to some other river for sale on joint accouut.

Every eighth day is called Calabar Sunday, the day following being formerly the market day or principal receiving day for the white traders of the native produce, which consisted principally, and still does, of palm oil. The native Sunday was passed in olden days by the chief in receiving visits from the white men and jamming[1] with them for any produce he had the intention of selling the following day, or clearing up any little Ju-Ju matters that he had been putting off for the want of a slack day, not because it was his Sunday, but because that was a day on which by custom he could not visit the ships. I remember it was on paying a visit to old King Amachree, the father of the late king of the same name, I saw for the first time a native sacrifice. I was then little more than a boy as a matter of fact, I was under seventeen years of age, but filling a man's place in New Calabar who had been invalided home. The old king had taken me under his special protection and gave me much good advice and counsel, which was of great use to me in my novel position. My employers ought to have been very thankful to him, for though I was the youngest trader in the river by some twelve years, I held my own with them and got a larger share of the produce of the river than my predecessor had done, all owing to the old brick of a king, who would come and see how I was doing on the big trade days, and if he thought I was not doing as well as my neighbours he would

[1] Jamming, a trade term, meaning making an agreement to buy or sell anything at an agreed price.

send off a message to a small creek close to the shipping, where the natives used to wait with their oil until it was jammed for, *id est*, agreed for, and order three or four canoes of oil to be sent off to me, though I had not seen its owner to agree with him as to what he was to get for it. I held this appointment for a little over six months, when, my senior having returned, I had to go back to my duties in Bonny under the chief agent of the firm, a Captain Peter Thompson, one of the kindest-hearted skippers that ever entered Bonny river. In those days we all had some nickname that we were known by amongst the natives, and another amongst the white men. Amongst the former he was called Calla Thompson, because he was short, in contradistinction to another Thompson who was tall, called Opo Thompson; but his name amongst the white men was Panter Thompson, owing to his inability to pronounce the "th" in panther during a discussion as to whether we had tigers or only panthers on the West Coast of Africa. Poor Panter, after a most successful voyage of a little over two years, was preparing to return home, and had only a few more weeks to remain in Bonny, when in stepping into his boat his foot slipped and he fell into the river at a point known to be infested with sharks. A brother skipper jumped into the boat, and actually clutched him by his cap at the same moment poor Panter said "I am gone, Ned!" no doubt feeling himself being drawn down by some hungry shark.

His son now commands one of the finest steamers of the African Steamship Company, and seems to have inherited in a marked degree all the good qualities of his father; so, travellers to West Africa, if you want a comfortable ship and a thorough good fellow to travel with

take your passage in the ship commanded by Captain Willie Thompson, R.N.R.

But this is digressing. I must get back to New Calabar and tell you what I saw at my introduction to Ju-Juism under the auspices of dear old King Amachree. The occasion was the swearing Ju-Ju with some people in the interior, with whom they had only lately opened up commercial relations, and they wanted them to swear they would trade with no other people but them. The deputation, who represented the market people, looked as wild a lot as one could wish to see, and, as far as I could make out, the ceremony I was watching was a kind of preliminary canter to a more impressive, and most likely more diabolical one to be carried out at some future date in the stranger folks' country. On this occasion the officiating Ju-Ju priest did not seem to address any of his words to the strangers, who looked on with a certain amount of fear depicted in their countenance.

The Ju-Ju priest was clothed (?) in a superb dark-coloured and greasy-looking rag about his loins, barely sufficient to satisfy the easiest going of European Lord Chamberlains; but from the expressive grunts of satisfaction which greeted his appearance in the Ju-Ju house, I was led to suppose his dress was quite correct and proper for the occasion. His head was shaved on the right side, and all down his right side and leg he had been dusted over with some greyish-white native chalk. He said a few words in an undertone to one of his assistants, who went out of sight for a moment or so and quickly returned with a very fine almost milk-white goat, the poor beast seeming to anticipate its fate from its fearfully loud bleating. The Ju-Ju priest seized the poor

beast by its muzzle with his left hand, and dexterously tossing its body under his left arm, forced its head back towards his left shoulder until the neck of the beast formed an arc, his assistant handing him at this moment a very sharp white-handled spear-pointed knife, which he drew across the animal's throat, almost severing its head from its body. Quick as lightning he dropped on one knee and held the bleeding animal over a receptacle, having the appearance of a large soup plate, fashioned in the clay of the ground immediately in front of the altar arrangement. In the centre of this plate was a hole down which the quickly coagulating blood slowly trickled; after the interval of what appeared to me minutes, but was in fact most likely less than a minute, the Ju-Ju man laid the lifeless body of the goat down with its neck over the opening in the plate, leaving it there to drain. At the moment of the sacrifice various gongs and old ship bells were struck by young men stationed near them for that purpose—a wrecked ship's bell being generally presented to the Ju-Ju house, though not as in the case of Ju-Ju goods by law prescribed. New Calabar people had been fairly well observant of this custom, and the wrecks numerous, judging from the number of ships' bells in the Ju-Ju house. At every movement of the Ju-Ju priest the king and chief would grunt out a noise very much resembling that auld Scotch word "ahum."

The Ju-Ju house had amongst its possessions several ill-shapen wooden idols, and scattered about the affair that represented an altar were various small idols looking very much like children's dolls; also several large elephant's tusks, and two or three very well carved ones, with the usual procession of coated and naked figures winding round them.

The present king of New Calabar[1] is a son of my old friend King Amachree, and is called King Amachree also, but has shown little of the ability of his late father, being completely led by the nose by his brother George Amachree, who practically rules both king and people.

The former is a small, quiet, and rather amiable man, but of a vacillating and unreliable character; his brother and prime minister is, on the contrary, a tall and very fine specimen of the negro race, endowed by nature with a very suave and not unmusical voice, a very able speaker, clear and logical reasoner, but of a very grasping nature—an excellent and successful trader and exceedingly nice man to deal with, as long as he has got things moving the way that suits him and his policy; but when thwarted in his designs, trading or political, he becomes a difficult customer to deal with, and a very unpleasant and objectionable type of negro "big man." Nevertheless, had he had the fortune to have been born in a civilised Africa, I feel confident his natural abilities, assisted by education, would have made him a man of eminence in whatever country his lot might have been cast.

Most of the New Calabar chiefs bear a very favourable repute amongst the white traders, and compare very favourably intellectually with the neighbouring chiefs of the Niger Delta.

Another chief of no mean capacity is Bob Manuel, of Abonema, exceedingly neat, almost a dandy in appearance, a very shrewd trader, clear and concise in his speech, honourable in all his dealings, of a very reserved tempera-

[1] This king is now dead, he was the last of the kings of New Calabar, the country being now ruled over by a native council under the direction of the Niger Coast Protectorate officials.

ment; but a charming man to talk with, once started on any topic that interests him or his visitor.

Owing to some peculiarities in their dress, the New Calabar chiefs are very different to the chiefs in other parts of the Delta. They never appear outside of their houses unless robed in long shirts (made of real india madras of bold check patterns, in which no other colour but red, blue and white is ever allowed to be used) reaching down to their heels; under this they wear a singlet and a flowing loin cloth of the same material as their shirts. Of late years, during the rainy season, some of them have added elastic-side boots and white socks, but the most curious part of their get-up is their head-gear, for since about 1866 they have taken to wearing wigs. These are only worn on high days and holidays and at special functions, but the effect sometimes is so utterly ridiculous as to be more than strangers can look at without laughing. Imagine an immensely stout and somewhat podgy negro with elastic-side boots, white stockings, long shirt, several strings of coral hung round his neck and hanging in festoons down as far as where his waistcoat would end, did he wear one, a Charles II. light flaxen wig, the latter topped up by an ordinary stove-pipe black silk hat!

This fashion of wearing wigs, I am afraid, was unconsciously inaugurated by me, having taken with me in 1865 to New Calabar some wigs that I had used in some private theatricals in England. A chief named Tom Fouché saw them, and was enchanted with a nigger's trick wig, the top of which could be raised by pulling a hidden silk cord, and eventually he became the proud possessor of my stock, and produced a great sensation the first public festival he appeared at. Previous to this I never saw a wig in New

Calabar; as a matter of fact, they have no excuse for them, a bald-headed native being an almost unheard-of curiosity, and grey or white heads are very scarce. Alas! like all pioneers, I did not reap the reward I should have done, as I left the New Calabar river before the fashion had caught on, and Messrs. Thomas Harrison and Co., of Liverpool, became the principal purveyors of wigs to the Court of New Calabar.

These people are remarkable for the bold stand they have made against the persecution of their neighbours almost from the day their founder planted his foot on the New Calabar soil, or mud rather, I should say; besides their wars with the Bonny men, they were often attacked by the Brass men, allies of Bonny. With the Okrika men they were almost constantly at war. This latter was a kind of guerilla warfare carried on in the creeks, and consisted in seizing any unprotected small canoe with its crew of two or three men or women and cargo, the latter generally being yams or Indian corn, the custom being on both sides to eat these prisoners.

The Church Missionary Society established a mission here in 1875, but during the war of 1879 and 1880 the missionary had to leave. Their success had not been brilliant up to this date, owing, no doubt, in some measure, to the immense power wielded by the Ju-Ju priests in New Calabar.

It was not until 1887-8 that the missionaries were able to again commence their labours amongst these people, and then not in the principal town. Archdeacon Crowther, however, succeeded about this time in getting a plot of ground in Bob Manuel's town, Abonema, for the purpose of building a mission station. As to the success of this

last effort I can't speak from personal observation, as I left this river shortly afterwards myself; in fact, it was on my last visit to Abonema that I conveyed in my steamer, the *Quorra*, the missionary and his wife to their new home from Brass. They were a young couple of very well educated and most intelligent Sierra Leone natives.

BONNY AND THE PEPPLE FAMILY

This river was the most important slave market in the Delta, as a matter of fact surpassing in numbers of slaves exported any other single slave-dealing station on the West or South-West Coast of Africa.

According to Mr. Clarkson, the historian of the abolition of the slave-trade, this river and Old Calabar exported more slaves than all the other slave-dealing centres on the West and South-West Coasts of Africa combined.

It is a well-known fact that for about two hundred years the average annual output of slaves through the Bonny River was about 16,000 (this included the shipments from New Calabar), totalling up to the immense number of 3,200,00 souls taken out of this part of Africa during two centuries.

The above figures do not represent the total depletion this part of Africa suffered during this time. To the above immense number of slaves exported must be added the number of lives lost in the raids made on the Ibo villages for the purpose of capturing the people to sell as slaves; we must also add the number that died on their way down from the interior to the coast, and to these again must be added the slaves refused by the European trader by reason

of any defect, malformation, or incipient signs of disease. The fate of these poor souls was sad ; but perhaps many of their brethren envied them their quick release from the cares of this world. The native slave-dealer was too practical a man to burden himself with mouths to fill that he could not immediately turn into cloth, rum, gunpowder or coral, so oftener than otherwise he would simply tell his own niggers to drop their canoe astern of the slave ship, cut the rejected slaves heads off, and cast their bodies into the river to feed the sharks, this often taking place within sight of the European slaver.

A very moderate allowance for loss of life between the interior and the slave-ship from the above-mentioned causes would be at the least 40 per cent.; thus totalling the immense number of 4,480,000 souls sent out of this one district in about two centuries. The greater number of these were Ibos, a slave much sought after in the olden days by planters in the West Indies and the Southern States of America.

I have mentioned these latter facts here to point out to my readers that the so-called benevolent domestic slavery as practised on the coast of Western Africa and tolerated in Her Britannic Majesty's West African Colonies, must, as a natural consequence, lead to a deplorable loss of life, though not in so wholesale a manner as the export of slaves led to in former days.

The Bonny people claim to be descended from the Ibo tribe, but I should be inclined to think that their proper description to-day would be a mixture of Ibos, Kwos, Billa, and sundry infusions of blood from inter-marriage with the female slaves brought down by the slave-dealers from places lying beyond and at the back of the Ibo people.

Whatever their origin may have been, a commercial spirit is, and has been since their first intercourse with Europeans, a very highly developed trait in their character. As I have already shown, they were the greatest slave traders in Western Africa, and when that, for them, lucrative trade was finally put a stop to by the treaty signed on the 21st of November, 1848, between Her Britannic Majesty's Consul and King Pepple, whereby King Pepple was to receive an annual present of $2,000 for six years—[previous to this, one, if not two treaties had been signed by King Pepple, with Her Britannic Majesty's representatives, with the same object; but the greed of gain had been too much for his dusky Majesty, combined with the continued presence on the coast of the Spanish slave-dealers; one of the latter being established at Brass as late as 1844]—they then turned their whole attention to the legitimate trade of palm oil, and soon became the largest exporters of that article on the West Coast of Africa. Their trade in this article had not been inconsiderable since 1825, at which date the Liverpool merchants had seriously turned their attention to legitimate trade.

In 1837-38, the export of palm oil was already about 14,200 tons, all carried in sailing vessels principally owned in Liverpool, and mostly by firms that had been in the slave trade.

Like the natives of Brass, many of these people have embraced the Christian faith, the Church Missionary Society having placed one of their stations here in 1866, some two years earlier than the Brass Mission was commenced.

Their endeavours have certainly met with considerable success in prevailing upon a large number of the natives to give up many of their Ju-Ju practices; amongst others,

the worship of the iguana, an immense lizard, which from time immemorial had been the Bonny man's titular guardian angel. They not only got them to give up worshipping this saurian, but also, to mark a new departure in their religious ideas, the missionaries prevailed upon the people to organise a general iguana hunt; so, following the old saying of "the better the day, the better the deed," one Easter Sunday, about the year 1883 or 1884, or about twenty-two years after the establishment of the mission, the bells of the mission church rang out the signal for the wholesale slaughter of these reptiles. To such an extent and with such good will did the people work that day, that by evening time not one was left alive in the town. That day it was everybody's job to kill these reptiles, but it was nobody's job to clear away the dead bodies, there being no County Council in Bonny to see to the scavenger work after this animal St. Bartholomew; the consequence was the stench was so great from the decaying bodies that every European predicted a general sickness would be the natural outcome of it all; but no such unlucky event happened, and the natives did not seem to notice the extra strong perfume very much—one of them observing, to a growl about it by a white man, that "it be all same them trade beef you sell we people for chop."

The Bonny men until late years were steeped in all the most vile practices of Ju-Juism—sacrificing human beings to their various Ju-Jus, and eating all their prisoners captured in war, certain of their Ju-Ju practices demanding an annual human sacrifice. If at this time they happened to be at peace with their neighbours, and consequently without any prisoner to be sacrificed, the Ju-Ju men would disguise themselves in some fantastic dress

(some Europeans have said they disguise themselves as leopards; I have never seen this disguise used, and doubt it very much), and prowl about the town and its byeways, seizing for their purpose in preference some stray stranger that might be staying in the town; failing a stranger, some noted bad character belonging to the town in whose fate no one would be greatly interested would be seized upon. To say these practices are completely stamped out would be, perhaps, not quite the truth; but that they are being stamped out I feel convinced, and considering what believers in Ju-Ju these people have been, I think I may say fairly quick.

The common sense of the people is assisting very much, and the women are showing themselves capable of something better than what their former state condemned them to. The final decision to slaughter the iguana some years ago was brought about by them in a great measure on solid common sense grounds, for had not the iguana been their mortal enemy for years by eating their fowls and chickens before their eyes, thus destroying about the only means a woman of the lower class, or one who had ceased to please her lord and master, had of making a little pin money.

The Ju-Ju house of Bonny, once the great show place of the town, has now completely disappeared and its hideous contents are scattered; strange to say, I saw, only a few weeks ago, in the house of a lady in London, one of the sacrificial pots of native earthenware that had done duty for many generations in the Bonny Ju-Ju House.

A description of this Ju-Ju house may be interesting to some of my readers. It was an oblong building of about forty feet long by thirty broad, surrounded by mud walls about eight or ten feet high; one portion over where the altar

stood had had sticks arranged, as if the intention had been at some time to roof it over; at the end behind the altar the wall had been built in a semicircle; the altar looked very much like an ordinary kitchen plate rack with the edges of the plate shelves picked out with goat skulls. There were three rows of these, and on the three plate shelves a row of grinning human skulls; under the bottom shelf, and between it and the top of what would be in a kitchen the dresser, were eight uprights garnished with rows of goats' skulls, the two middle uprights being supplied with a double row; below the top of the dresser, which was garnished with a board painted blue and white, was arranged a kind of drapery of filaments of palm fronds, drawn asunder from the centre, exposing a round hole with a raised rim of clay surrounding it, ostensibly to receive the blood of the victims and libations of palm wine.

To one side, and near the altar, was a kind of roughly made table fixed on four straight legs; upon this was displayed a number of human bones and several skulls; leaning against this table was a frame looking very like a chicken walk on to the table; this also was garnished with horizontal rows of human skulls—here and there were to be seen human skulls lying about; outside the Ju-Ju house, upon a kind of trellis work, were a number of shrivelled portions of human flesh.

Whilst writing about the wholesale slaughter of iguanas I forgot to mention that this was not the first time an animal that was Ju-Ju and held in high veneration had had a general battue arranged for it. The monkey used to hold a place in Bonny equal with the iguana, but for some reason or another it fell from its high estate, and was as ruthlessly slaughtered by its quondam worshippers.

Other Ju-Jus were the shark and the Spirit of the Water, or supposed guardian angel of the Bar. The bull was at one time worshipped, but not of late years; but still fresh beef was Ju-Ju, and twenty years ago no Bonny gentleman would touch it.

Like fresh beef, milk of cows or goats was never used by natives, neither were eggs eaten by Bonny men or any of the neighbouring coast tribes.

Native houses in Bonny are very little different to the general run of native houses along this coast, as far as the external appearance goes; but inside they are perfect Hampton Court mazes to the uninitiated. A noticeable peculiarity is that the entrance door and all the other doorways in a native house have a fixed barrier about eighteen inches high between each room from whence start the doorways proper. This forms a very favourite seat of the master of the house or his wife, but one must never step over them while any one is sitting on them; a man stepping over one while a man is sitting there means "poison for eye," as the natives express it, which means to say your action will cause them sickness. A man doing the same when a female is sitting in this position has a much more significant meaning, and for a slave would entail a good flogging.

No community of natives demonstrates the peculiar workings of domestic slavery so well as these people, for in no other place on the coast can any one find so many instances of the rapid rise of a bought slave from the lowest rung of the slave ladder to the topmost.

The bought slave was quite a different class to the son of a slave born in Bonny of slave parents; for outside the direct descendants of the Pepple family, the freemen of

Bonny could be counted on one hand; therefore, a slave born in Bonny was looked upon as being almost equal with a freeman. These were called Bonny free; and the Bonny free, though they boast of their birth, can't boast of the most brains, for the most intelligent men of these people—especially during the last fifty years—have been bought slaves, with few exceptions.

In 1837, the then reigning King Pepple had to get Captain Craigie of H.M. Navy to assist him in asserting his rights, a slave of his having usurped his place. A few years after, in 1854, this same King Pepple was deposed by his chiefs for making continuous war on New Calabar, and thus draining the wealth of the country, as well as for his cruelties to his own people; they, at the same time, found out another charge against him that he was an usurper, as there was a young man named Dapho Pepple, a son of his elder brother, who was entitled to the throne, and, with the assistance of the late Consul Beecroft, the change was made and the fighting King Pepple was taken away to Fernando Po, and eventually found his way to England in 1857; there he resided four years, was carefully looked after by the temperance party, and eventually became a convert to Christianity. Several sets of verses were strung together for and about him by the goody goody papers of the time. He made strong appeals to the British public for £20,000 to establish a mission in his country; but in this matter I am afraid he was not successful, as the mission was never started by him, and on his arrival home in Bonny River, in August, 1861, there was a dearth of current coin in the royal pockets.

The following is King Pepple's address in verse, which,

he asserted, he spoke when seeking funds to establish a mission in his country. He only asked for a modest £20,000. I never heard what he got, but one thing I do know, whatever he did get, he never expended a shilling of it for the purpose it was given him :—

Beloved bretheren,
Young and old,
I come to day to ask for gold
To help the missionary Coons
Who brave Bonny's hot simoons.
Tooralooral ! Rich and poor,
A pewter plate is at the door !

Now why must each of you decide
Your heart and purse to open wide ?
It is because the imbued sin
That e'en now lurks each heart within
Tooralooral ! with all its might
Is prompting you to close them tight.

And then it must not be forgot
That Hell is wide and awful hot,
And gibbering fiends around us grin
With joy to see us tumble in.
Tooralooral! don't forget
The Devil he may have you yet.

But would you from destruction turn,
Nor 'mid sulphurous vapours burn,
But each become a blessed spirit,
And kingdom come with joy inherit.
Tooralooral ! tip us a bob,
To help us on our holy job.

Remember, friends, we are but dust,
And die in course of time we must.
To show the seeds have taken root
By yielding up the proper fruit,
Tooralooral ! are you willing
To subscribe another shilling ?

If you will help to save the nigger
Your crown of glory shall be bigger,
More white your robes, your sandals smarter,
When we shall meet above herear'ter
Tooralooral ! Psalms and Hymns,
Cherubs sweet and Seraphims.

Fields of glory, floods of light,
Sweet effulgence, Angels bright,
Sounds symphoneous, jewels rare,
Sheets of gold and perfumed air.
Tooralooral ! fellow men,
Hallelujah ! and Amen.

By what specious reasoning he succeeded in prevailing upon the authorities at the Foreign Office to countenance his return to Bonny, or what he described as his dominions, I know not. The fact, however, is on record that he did get this permission, and that he found some good friends in London to assist him with sufficient cash to pay £900 down on account of the charter of the *Bewley*, a small vessel of only about 180 tons register, which was to carry him and his consort, the Queen Eleanor, better known in Bonny as Allaputa, and their royal suite, which consisted of nine English men and two English women ; amongst the former he had nominated the following officials, viz., premier, secretary, an assistant secretary, three clerks, and one doctor, a farmer, and a valet for himself. Mrs. Wood, the gardener's wife, was to be schoolmistress, and the other English woman was to act as a maid of honour to the Queen Eleanor. All these people had agreements for salaries varying from £60 to £600 per annum, some of them with an allowance of £15 for uniform ; several of the agreements contained a clause that stipulated that the king was to supply them with suitable apartments in the royal

palace. On arriving in the Bonny river, these poor people had a rude awakening, for they found that the king was not wanted by his people, had no royal palace, and no revenues. However, they did not immediately quit the service of the dusky monarch, but held on in the hope of getting sufficient arrears of pay out of him to pay their passages home; they had some reason for their action, for the old king still had a strong party friendly to him in the town. The king funked landing amongst his late subjects, and he remained on board the *Bewley*, until the 15th of October, landing at last with many misgivings. Strange to relate, the same day the walls of the Bonny Ju-Ju house crumbled to bits, caused, no doubt, by the heavy rains, but the king looked upon it as an omen boding no good to him.

When the king landed, the captain of the *Bewley* gave the European suite notice that he could not supply them with food any longer, as the king was not able to pay him what he owed the ship.

These poor people now found themselves in a sad plight, but the Liverpool supercargoes in the river gave them quarters in their different sailing vessels and hulks. Those who wished to try their luck in some other place on the coast had their passages paid by the supercargoes of the river; Miss Mary, the queen's maid of honour, was about the first to be sent home, the gardener and his wife left in November, and by the end of December the last of the king's white suite left the river. None were ever paid their arrears of wages, the king being with difficulty made to find £10 towards the passage money of the doctor. Strange to relate, though these eleven white people could not be said to have passed their time in Bonny river under the best conditions for health, being cooped up on board a

vessel of only 180 tons register, yet only one of them died, that one being the king's valet. All had remained more than two months in the river, some four months, at a time, when, according to some authorities, the coast climate is most to be dreaded.

King Pepple never regained his ancient sway over the Bonny people, and after lingering in very indifferent health a few years, during which time he was every now and again springing some new intrigue on his people, he passed away at Ju-Ju Town, where he had been living almost ever since his return to his native land, for his health's sake, he asserted, but rumour had it that he felt himself safer away from the vicinity of his more powerful chiefs.

After his death, the affairs of Bonny went back into the hands of the four regents, as they had been since the death of King Dapho up to the time of King Pepple's return in 1861, and in a great measure remained during the few years Pepple lived.

These regents had originally been appointed by the late Acting Consul Lynslager on the 1st of September, 1855, and were the heads of the following houses :—

Name of House.	*Native Name of Chief in Possession in* 1855.	*Name of Chief in Possession in* 1869.
Annie Pepple . .	Elolly Pepple. . . .	Ja Ja.
Captain Hart . .	Apho Dappa . . .	Still alive.
Adda Allison . .	Generally called Addah. . .	" "
Manilla Pepple. .	Erinashaboo. . .	Warrabo.
Oko Jumbo }	Advisers to the regents,	Still alive.
Jim Banago }	both wealthy men.	Squeeze Banago.

The above lists show in a very marked manner the favourable side of domestic slavery; every one of the

above chiefs were bought slaves or the sons of bought slaves, and in that case would be Bonny free. Ja Ja was bought by Adda Allison, and by him presented to Elolly Pepple, the name Ja Ja signifying a present in some native language in the hinterland of Bonny. Oko Jumbo was a slave bought by Manilla Pepple. Captain Hart was a slave bought from the Okrika people, and had been head slave of the late King Dapho. The others I am not sure about, but Squeeze Banago and Warrabo may have been Bonny free, though I have my doubts, but in no case from 1855 up to this date, 1869, had a son inherited from his father. I don't wish to be understood never did; because cases have occurred, and did occur during this time, where the son followed the father, but in these six principal Houses the chief was not the son of the former head of the House. A House, in native parlance, meant a number of petty chiefs congregated together for mutual protection, owning allegiance generally to the richest and most intelligent one amongst them, whom they called their father, and the Europeans called a chief. A House could be formed as Oko Jumbo formed his. He, as I have said above, was a bought slave, yet, by his superior intelligence and industry, he amassed, in early life, great wealth, was able to buy numerous slaves, some of whom showed similar aptitude to himself, to whom he showed the same encouragement that his master had shown him, and allowed them to trade on their own account. These men in their turn bought slaves, and allowed them similar privileges. This kind of evolution went on with uninterrupted success until Oko Jumbo, after twenty years' trading, found himself at the head of five or six hundred slaves; for, according to country law, all the

slaves bought by his favoured slaves (now become petty chiefs or head boys) belonged to him as he belonged to Manilla Pepple; but owing to his accumulated riches and numerous followers he was beginning to take rank as a chief and head of a House. One must not think that the assistance given by an owner of slaves to here and there one, as described above, is all pure philanthropy; it is nothing of the kind, for for every hundred pounds worth of trade the slave does on his own account nowadays means £25 into the coffers of his master. In the early sixties this profit was not so great, but it represented in those days a ten to fifteen per cent. commission to the head of the House.

There were five kinds of commission paid by the European traders to the heads of Houses. There were Ex Bar, Custom Bar, Work Bar, Gentlemen's Dash and Boys' Dash, and as a slave who had been allowed to trade by his master rose in the social scale he marked the different stages he passed through by being allowed gradually to claim these various commissions on his own oil from the Europeans; thus at first he would get only the boys' dash, = 1 pes of small Manchester cloth, value about 2s., and a fisherman's red cap, worth about 3d. The latter was supposed to go to his pull-away boys to buy palm wine. The second stage in his progress would be marked by his being allowed to take the gentlemen's dash, consisting of two pes of cloth, value 2s. 6d. each. The third he would be allowed to receive a portion of the work bar on his oil, sometimes only a third, gradually increasing until he would be allowed to claim the whole work bar. On arriving at this latter stage he would be expected to provide a war canoe and men and arms for the same, ready at any moment to turn out and fight for the general good

of the country or to take part in any quarrel between his master and any other chief in Bonny, or to attend his master with it when he wished to visit any small country and make a little naval demonstration if these people had been a little slack in paying their debts. In course of time, this man, having supplied a war canoe, would aspire to being recognised as a chief, and thus be entitled to wear an eagle's feather in his hat. To arrive at this stage he would have to make some payments to the principal Ju-Ju men of the town, and if he never had been at war, and thus missed the opportunity of cutting an enemy's head off, he must purchase a slave for this purpose and cut the poor creature's head off in cold blood in the Ju-Ju house. This function was rigorously insisted upon by the Ju-Ju men, and under no circumstances would they allow a man to become a chief who had not cut a man's head off, either in war or in cold blood. After this ceremony, the new-made chief would be duly introduced, at a public meeting, to all the other chiefs, and the next day several brother chiefs would accompany him round to the various trading ships in the port, to intimate to the Europeans that he was a full chief, and entitled to receive all the work bar, ex bar, gentlemen's dash and boys' dash that a chief was entitled to. I have previously mentioned custom bar ; this originally was paid only to the king, and consisted of one iron bar upon every puncheon of oil bought by the European trader ; in early days the king used to put a boy on board each ship to collect this toll, but in course of time found that he was more sure to be honestly dealt with if he left the white man to pay him occasionally what was due to him, than to receive it daily through his bar-boy. On the deposition of King Pepple, the custom bar was

collected by the four regents, whose descendants demanded it as a right, even after the return of the king, and continued to get it, until a few years ago, when all these bars were abolished in Bonny by mutual consent, and in their place was paid "topping," varying from time to time, according to the saneness of the white traders, from twenty to thirty per cent. on the price of the oil, gentlemen's and boys' dash still being continued.

Referring back to the head-cutting ceremony, I must here mention a curious fact, when one remembers the savage state of these people, that I have known many Bonny men who were in a position to be made chiefs, and had conformed to all the preliminary forms, but who shirked the head cutting in cold blood, preferring thus to continue head boys only, until forced by the chiefs (generally instigated by the Ju-Ju men) to complete the ceremony. One in particular, named Jungo, I remember, who at the time of the civil war in Bonny in 1869 had been for some time eligible to become a chief, yet shirked the head cutting; he was amongst those who followed Ja Ja in his retreat to the Ekomtoro, afterwards called the Opobo; it was not until some years after arriving in the Opobo that some Ju-Ju priest remembered that Jungo had not distinguished himself during the war, and that he had yet to perform his head cutting. Poor Jungo was one of the mildest natured black men I have ever known, and tried all kinds of schemes to get out of the ordeal, even offering to give up some of his acquired rights, but public opinion and the Ju-Ju priests were too much for him, and the slave to be sacrificed was bought, and the ceremony carried out by Jungo; but he was such a poor performer that he unintentionally caused considerably more pain to his

victim than necessary, for Jungo tried to do the terrible deed by striking with his face turned the other way, the victim absolutely cursing him for his bungling. This latter episode may, perhaps, be put down as a traveller's yarn, but it is not at all to be wondered at, when it is known that these poor wretches are made drunk previous to being decapitated.

Having described how a slave might become a chief, I will now describe how one became the head of a House or chief, and afterwards made himself a king, and one of the most powerful in this part of Africa.

When Eloily Pepple died (some say he was poisoned), shortly after the return of King Pepple in 1861, the Annie Pepple House was for some time left without a head. The various chiefs held repeated meetings, and the generally coveted honour did not seem to tempt any of them; by right of seniority a chief named Uranta (about the freest man in the House, some asserted he was absolutely free), was offered the place, but he, for private reasons of his own, refused. After Uranta there were Annie Stuart, Black Foobra and Warrasoo, all men of some considerable riches and consideration, but they also shirked the responsibility, for Eloily had been a very big trader, and owed the white men, it was said, at the time of his death, a thousand or fifteen hundred puncheons of oil, equivalent to between ten and fifteen thousand pounds sterling, and none of the foremost men of the house dare tackle the settlement of such a large debit account, fearing that the late chief had not left sufficient behind him to settle up with, without supplementing it with their own savings, which might end in bankruptcy for them, and their final downfall from the headship. At this time there was in the House a young

man who had not very long been made a chief, though he had, for a considerable number of years, been a very good trader, and was much respected by the white traders for his honesty and the dependence they could place in him to strictly adhere to any promise he made in trade matters. This young chief was Ja Ja, and though he was one of the youngest chiefs in the house, he was unanimously elected to fill the office. He, however, did not immediately accept, though his being unanimously elected amounted almost to his being forced to accept.

He first visited *seriatim* each white trader, counted book (as they call going through the accounts of a House), and found that though there was a very large debit against the late chief, there was also a large credit, as a set off, in the way of sub-chief's work bars and the late Elolly's own work bars. At the same time, he arranged with each supercargo the order in which he would pay them off, commencing with those who were nearing the end of their voyage, and getting a promise from each that if he settled according to promise they would get their successor to give him an equal amount of credit that they themselves had given the late Elolly. A few days after, at a public meeting of the chiefs of the Annie Pepple House, he intimated his readiness to accept the headship of the House, distinctly informing them that, as they had elected him themselves, they must assist him in upholding his authority over them as a body, which would be no easy task for him when there were so many older and richer chiefs in the House who were more entitled than he was to the post. The older chiefs, only too delighted to have found in Ja Ja some one to take the responsibility of the late chief's debts and the troubles of chieftainship off their shoulders, were prepared,

and did solemnly swear, to assist him with their moral support, taking care not to pledge themselves to assist him in any of the financial affairs of the House.

Ja Ja had not been many months head of the Annie Pepple House before he began to show the old chiefs what kind of metal he was made of; for during the first twelve months he had selected from amongst the late Elolly's slaves no less than eighteen or twenty young men, who had already amassed a little wealth, and whom he thought capable of being trusted to trade on their own account, bought canoes for them, took them to the European traders, got them to advance each of these young men from five to ten puncheons worth of goods, he himself standing guarantee for them. This operation had the effect of making Ja Ja immediately popular amongst all classes of the slaves of the late chief. At the same time, the slaves of the old chief of the House began to see that there was a man at the head of the House who would set a good example to their immediate masters. Some of these young men are now wealthy chiefs in Opobo, and as evidence that they had been well chosen, Ja Ja was never called upon to fulfil his guarantee.

Two years after Ja Ja was placed at the head of the House the late Elolly's debts were all cleared off, no white trader having been detained beyond the date Ja Ja had promised the late chief's debts should be paid by. In consideration for the prompt manner in which Ja Ja had paid up, he received from each supercargo whom the late chief had dealt with a present varying from five to ten per cent. on the amount paid.

From this date Ja Ja never looked back, becoming the most popular chief in Bonny amongst the white men, and

the idol of his own people, but looked upon with jealousy by the Manilla Pepple House, to which belonged the successful slave, Oko Jumbo, who was now, both in riches and power, the equal of Ja Ja, though never his equal in popularity amongst the Europeans. Though there was a king in Bonny, and Warribo was the head of the Manilla House, *id est*, the king's House, Oko Jumbo and Ja Ja were looked upon by every one as being the rulers of Bonny. The demon of jealousy was at work, and in the private councils of the Manilla House it was decided that Ja Ja must be pulled down, but the only means of doing it was a civil war. The risks of this Oko Jumbo, Warribo and the king did not care to face, as though the Oko Jumbo party was most numerous, each side was equally supplied with big guns and rifles up to a short time before the end of 1868, when two European traders, on their way home, picked up a number of old 32 lb. carronades at Sierra Leone, and shipped the same down to Oko Jumbo. This sudden accession of war material, of course, put him in a position to provoke Ja Ja, and he cast about for a *causus belli*, but Ja Ja was an astute diplomatist, and managed to steer clear of all his opponent's pitfalls. A very small matter is often seized upon by natives as a means to provoke a war, and in this case the cause of quarrel was found in "that a woman of the Annie Pepple House had drawn water from some pond belonging to the Manilla Pepple House." This was thought quite sufficient. A most insulting message was sent to Ja Ja, intimating that the time had come when nothing but a fight could settle their differences. His reply was characteristic of the man; he reminded them that he had no wish to fight, was not prepared, and, furthermore, that neither he, nor they, had

paid their debts to the Europeans. The latter part of the message was too much for an irascible, one-eyed old fighting chief named Jack Wilson Pepple, so off he marched to his own house, and fired the first round shot into the Annie Pepple part of the town, and civil war was commenced. It was a bit overdue, the last having taken place in 1855. As a rule, they come round about every ten years, like the epidemics of malignant bilious fever of the coast.

The Annie Pepple House was not slow to reply, but Ja Ja knew he was over-matched, both in guns and numbers of fighting men, so he only kept up a semblance of a fight sufficiently long to allow him to make a retreat to a small town called Tombo, in the next creek to the Bonny creek, only about three miles from Bonny by water, less by land.

From here he was in a better position to parley with his opponents, and make terms if possible, but he soon saw that no arrangement less than the complete humiliation of himself and people was going to satisfy his enemies, for besides the jealousy of Oko Jumbo, the young King George Pepple, son of the gentleman who had been to England and brought out the European suite, had not forgotten that the Annie Pepple house, represented by the late Elolly, had been the chief opponents of his late father when he returned to Bonny in 1861 after his exile.

This young man had been educated in England, and I must say did credit to whoever had had charge of his education. He both spoke and wrote English correctly, and had his father been able to hand over to him the kingship as he had received it in 1837, he might have

blossomed into a model king in West Africa; but, alas! the only thing he inherited from his father beyond the kingship was debt—king only in name, receiving only so much of his dues as the principal chiefs liked to allow him, not having the means of being a large trader, looked upon with scant favour by the Europeans, and owing to his English education lacking the rude ability of such men as Oko Jumbo and Ja Ja to make a position for himself, he became but a puppet in the hands of his principal chiefs; a fate, I am afraid, which has generally befallen the native of these parts who has attempted to retain any of the teachings of Christianity on his return amongst his pagan brethren.

Few people can understand the reason of this. It is simply another proof of the wonderful power of Ju-Ju amongst these people, for it is to that occult influence that I trace the general ill-success of the educated native of the Delta in his own country,—unless he returns to all the pagan gods of his forefathers, and until he does so many channels of prosperity are completely closed to him.

I am afraid I have wandered a little from my subject, but in doing so I hope I have made some things clear that otherwise might have appeared a little mixed from an European point of view, so will now return to Ja Ja.

From Tombo Town Ja Ja communicated with the Bonny Court of Equity, and a truce was arranged, native meetings followed, and after several weeks of palavering, no better terms were offered Ja Ja than had before been offered to him. The white men interested themselves in the matter, and held meetings innumerable, until at last they were as divided as the natives. With the exception of one or two at the outside, they understood so little of

the occult workings of native squabbles that they could do little to smooth matters over. In the meantime, Ja Ja had been studying a masterly plan of retreat from Tombo Town to a river called the Ekomtoro, also called the Rio Condé in ancient maps.

Once in this river, by fortifying two or three points he would be able to completely turn the tables on his enemies by barring their way to the Eboe markets, but to get there he would have to pass one, if not two, fortified points held by the Manilla Pepple people. Besides this, what would his position be when there, if he could not get any white men there to trade with? Luckily for him, there dropped from the clouds the very man he wanted. This was a trader named Charley, who had been in the Bonny River some years before, and was now established at Brass on his own account. At an interview with Ja Ja, that did not last half an hour, the whole plan of campaign was arranged. Charley returned to Brass and confided the scheme to his friend, Archie McEachan, who decided to join him. Thus Ja Ja had the certainty of support in his new home if he could only get there, and get there he did.

Being shortly after joined by these two white traders trade was opened in the Ekomtoro, and on Christmas Day, 1870, Ekomtoro was named the Ŏpŏbō River, after Ŏpŏbō, the founder of the town of "Grand Bonny," as Bonny men delight to call their mud and thatch capital.

The name of Ŏpŏbō was chosen by Ja Ja himself. To students of the peculiar relationship existing between a bought slave and his master, the latter looked up to and called father by his slave, this choice of the name of a man

who had been a great man in his father's house, *id est*, his master's, demonstrates in a striking manner the veneration a bought slave, under the system of domestic slavery in these parts, in many cases displays, equalling in every respect that of the free-born direct descendant.

The tables were now turned with a vengeance, and Ja Ja remained the master of the position, and for several years kept the Bonny men out of the Eboe and Qua markets; eventually agreeing to have the differences between himself and the Manilla Pepple people settled by the arbitration of the New Calabar and the Okrika chiefs with Commodore Commerell and Mr. Charles Livingstone, Her Britannic Majesty's Consul for the Bights of Benin and Biafra, as referees.

Evidently the arbitrators considered that Ja Ja was in no way to blame for the civil war that had taken place in Bonny, for in the division of the markets that had been common property when Ja Ja and his people had formed an integral part of the Bonny nation, the greater part was given to Ja Ja and his right to remain where he had established himself fully recognised.

Immediately on this settlement being come to, Her Britannic Majesty's Consul entered into a commercial treaty with Ja Ja recognising him as King of Opobo. This treaty was signed January 4th, 1873, the deed of arbitration having been signed the day previous.

In giving my readers the history of this man up to this point, I have always had in my mind the question of domestic slavery, being anxious to give its most favourable side as fair an exposition as its unfavourable.

I have in previous pages mentioned some of the latter, but those remarks only dealt with the early stages of the

slave's condition after capture in the interior and his risks of arriving alive at his destination. I have now to deal with him as a chattel of one of the petty chiefs, chiefs or kings of Western Africa, admitting that his chances of improving his condition are manifold, his life until he gets his foot on the first rung of the ladder of advancement is terrible; he never knows from one moment to another when he may be re-sold, he is badly fed, in fact, some masters never feed their slaves at all when they are not actually employed pulling a canoe or doing other labour such as making farm, cutting sticks for house-building, &c. Failing these employments, the slave has all his time to himself. His chances of putting this time to any profit are very few in the Oil Rivers; and should he by chance get some employment from a white man, his owner takes good care to receive his pay, the only thing the slave getting out of it being three full meals a day for a few days, making the starvation fare he is accustomed to the harder to bear afterwards. Were it not for their adopted mother, *id est*, the woman they are given to on being bought, their state would be absolutely unbearable in times of forced idleness; but these women almost invariably have considerable affection for their numerous adopted children, and though their means may be very limited, they generally manage to supply them with at least one meal a day in return for the many little services they perform for them, such as fetching water, carrying firewood in from the bush, selling their few fowls and eggs to the white men, and doing any other little matter of trade for them.

Even those slaves who have been lucky enough to fall into the hands of a master who sees that they at least do

not starve, have along with their less lucky brethren to put up with the ungovernable fits of temper which some of these black slave owners display at times, in many cases inflicting the most terrible punishment for trivial offences, as often as not only on suspicion that the slave was guilty. Amongst the numerous punishments I have known inflicted are the following.

Ear cutting in its various stages, from clipping to total dismemberment; crucifixion round a large cask; extraction of teeth; suspension by the thumbs; Chilli peppers pounded and stuffed up the nostrils, and forced into the eyes and ears; fastening the victim to a post driven into the beach at low water and leaving him there to be drowned with the rising tide, or to be eaten by the sharks or crocodiles piecemeal; heavily ironed and chained to a post in their master's compound, without any covering over their heads, kept in this state for weeks, with so little food allowed them that cases have been known where the irons have dropped off them, but they, poor wretches, were too weak to escape, as they had been reduced to living skeletons; impaling on stakes; forcing a long steel ram rod through the body until it appeared through the top of the skull. The above are a few of the punishments that even to this day are practised, not only in the Niger Delta, but in the outlying districts of the West African colonies. It is very rare that the Government officials get to know anything about them; and when they do, it is difficult to procure a conviction owing to the fear natives have to come forward and act as witnesses.

Besides the punishments enumerated above, there are many others, some of which are too horrible to be described here.

One often hears people who know a little about West Africa talk about native law, but they forget to mention, if they happen to know it, that in a powerful chief's house there is only one exponent of the law, and that is the chief; for him native law only begins to have effect when it is a matter between himself and some other chief, or a combination of chiefs, whose power is equal or superior to his own.

As an instance of the form which native justice (?) sometimes takes, I will relate what took place some years ago in one of the oil rivers. An old and very powerful chief had a young wife of whom he was immoderately jealous. Amongst his favourite attendants was a young male slave, a mere boy, to whom he had given many tokens of his favour; but the demon of jealousy whispered to him that his young slave boy was looked upon with too much favour by his young wife—herself little more than a child. That a slave of his should dare to cast his eyes on his wife was more than this terrible old chief could stand, so he decided to put an end at once to the love dreams of his slave, and at the same time point out to any other enterprising slave of his how dangerous it was to aspire to the forbidden favours of a chief's wife. So he ordered his young wife to cook him a specially good palm oil chop, a native dish of great repute, for his breakfast the following morning. The next morning when he sat down to his breakfast his favourite slave was behind his chair in attendance; his young wife was present to see her lord and master was properly served—the wives do not sit at table with their husbands—when suddenly the chief turned in his chair and ordered his young slave to sit at table with him. Naturally the slave hesitated to accept such an unheard-

of honour as to sit at table with his master; quickly scenting something terrible was going to befall him, he attempted to leave the apartment, but other slaves quickly barred his way, and he was brought back trembling with fright, the beads of perspiration rolling down his face and body in little rivulets, and placed in a chair opposite his master, who, all this time had not displayed any signs of anger; gradually the boy began to regain somewhat his scattered senses. Finding his master displayed no signs of anger, he began to do as he was ordered, the chief at the same time plied him with repeated doses of spirits, till at last the boy began to chatter, and attacked the food with a will. At length, having eaten and drunk till he could scarcely stand, his master asked him had he enjoyed his young mistress's cooking. On his replying yes, the chief called for a revolver, and telling him it was the last thing he ever would enjoy of his young mistress, he emptied the six chambers of the revolver into the poor lad's head; then having ordered his body to be thrown into the river, went on with the usual occupations of the day, never having once mentioned the reason of his act to his people nor explaining his meaning to his young wife.

To the native mind the chief's actions spoke as plainly as possible; but not having spoken, his wife's family could not, had they wished, have made a palaver about his wife's good fame; for though the chief was originally a bought slave or nigger himself, his young wife was country free, her family being sufficiently powerful to have made things uncomfortable for him if he had accused her without proof of guilt. Had she been a slave, the chances are she would have been slaughtered.

I do not wish to convey to my readers the idea that all

chiefs in the Niger Delta are cruel monsters, but they all have power of life and death over their slaves; the mildest of them occasionally may find themselves so placed that they are compelled in conformity with some Ju-Ju right to sacrifice a slave or two. The ordinary punishments for theft and insubordination practised amongst these people are often terribly cruel and unnecessarily severe.

Of course the Government of the Niger Coast Protectorate is steadily breaking down these savage customs, wherever and whenever they hear of them being practised within their jurisdiction; but the formation of the country, the dense forests, and the superstition of the people, all assist in keeping most cases from coming to their knowledge.

Before taking leave of the Bonny people, I must not omit to mention that the custom of destroying twin children and children who had the misfortune to be born with teeth was, and is, a custom still observed amongst them. Another custom prevalent amongst these people, and common more or less to all other natives in the Delta, was the destroying of any woman if she became the mother of more than four children.

ANDONI RIVER AND ITS INHABITANTS.

This river lies a few miles to the east of Bonny River. The inhabitants of the lower part of the river are called Andoni men, and during the slave-dealing days these people were as well known to Europeans as the Bonny men, but, owing in a great measure to the much deeper water at the entrance to Bonny River than was to be found on the Andoni bar, the former river offering thus more facilities

for deep-draughted ships, the traders gradually deserted the Andoni altogether, though these people were, I believe, the original owners of the land now claimed by the Bonny people as forming the Bonny kingdom. The Andoni men, being deserted by the European traders, gradually became a race of fishermen and small farmers. The Bonny men, having become the dominant race, and not allowing the Andonis any intercourse with the white traders in their river, the Andoni men protested against this treatment, and waged war against the Bonny men on many occasions in the early part of this century. The last war between these two peoples continued for some years; the Bonny men not always getting the best of these encounters, were very glad to come to terms with them in 1846, a treaty being then signed between the two tribes, wherein the Andoni men were secured equal rights with the Bonny men, but the commercial enterprise of these people seems to have died out. Yet the King of Doni Town, as their principal town is called in old maps, was reported by traders, who visited him in 1699, as being a man of some intelligence, speaking the Portuguese language fluently, and having some knowledge of the Roman Catholic faith, yet still adhering to all the customs of Ju-Juism, furthermore describing the people as being such implicit believers in their Ju-Ju that they would kill any one who touched any of the idols in their Ju-Ju house.

This may have been true at the time, but about five and twenty years ago I visited the town of Doni, as also their Ju-Ju house, and handled some of their idols, and they showed no irritation at my so doing. I had, of course, asked permission to do so of the Ju-Ju man who was showing me round. I have no doubt they would resent

any one interfering with them without their permission. When I visited these people they gave me the idea that they had never seen a white man, or had any communication with him, for I vainly searched for any evidence that the white man had ever been established in their river. From all I was able to gather of their manners and customs I found that they differed little from any of their neighbours, though they are always described by interested parties as being inveterate cannibals and dangerous people for strangers to visit.

OPOBO RIVER.

After leaving Andoni, and continuing down the coast some ten or fifteen miles, the Opobo discharges itself into the sea. This river, marked in ancient maps as the Rio Condé and Ekomtoro, is the most direct way to the Ibo palm-oil-producing country.

This river was well known to the Portuguese and Spanish slave traders, but as Bonny became the great centre for the slave trade, this river was completely deserted and forgotten to such an extent that, though an opening in the coast line was shown on the English charts where this river was supposed to be, it was never thought worth the trouble of naming, and remained quite unknown to the English traders until it came suddenly into repute, owing to Ja Ja establishing himself here in 1870.

The people here are the Bonny men and their descendants who followed Ja Ja's fortunes, therefore their manners and customs are identical with those of Bonny.

The physical appearance of these people is somewhat better than that of the Bonny men, owing, I think, to the

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JA JA MAKING JU JU.

position of their town, which is built on a better soil, and raised a few feet higher than that of Bonny from the level of the river, also their uninterrupted successful trade since their arrival in this country has doubtless not a little contributed to their improved condition, while, on the other hand, the Bonny men suffered severely during the years from 1869 to 1873, owing to Ja Ja barring their way to the markets, and they seem never to have recovered themselves.

Trading stations of the white men are at the mouth of the river and at Eguanga, the latter a station a few miles above Opobo town.

Opobo became, under King Ja Ja's firm rule, one of the largest exporting centres of palm oil in the Delta, and for years King Ja Ja enjoyed a not undeserved popularity amongst the white traders who visited his river, but a time came when the price of palm oil fell to such a low figure in England that the European firms established in Opobo could not make both ends meet, so they intimated to King Ja Ja that they were going to reduce the price paid in the river, to which he replied by shipping large quantities of his oil to England, allowing his people only to sell a portion of their produce to the white men. The latter now formulated a scheme amongst themselves to divide equally whatever produce came into the river, and thus do away with competition amongst themselves. Ja Ja found that sending his oil to England was not quite so lucrative as he could wish, owing to the length of time it took to get his returns back, namely, about three months at the earliest, whilst by selling in the river he could turn over his money three or four times during that period. He therefore tried several means to break the white men's combination, at last hitting upon the bright idea of offering the whole of

the river's trade to one English house. The mere fact of his being able to make this offer shows the absolute power to which he had arrived amongst his own people. His bait took with one of the European traders; the latter could not resist the golden vision of the yellow grease thus displayed before him by the astute Ja Ja, who metaphorically dangled before his eyes hundreds of canoes laden with the coveted palm oil. A bargain was struck, and one fine morning the other white traders in the river woke up to the fact that their combination was at an end, for on taking their morning spy round the river through their binoculars (no palm oil trader that respects himself being without a pair of these and a tripod telescope, for more minute observation of his opponents' doings) they saw a fleet of over a hundred canoes round the renegade's wharf, and for nearly two years this trader scooped all the trade. The fat was fairly in the fire now, and the other white traders sent a notice to Ja Ja that they intended to go to his markets. Ja Ja replied that he held a treaty, signed in 1873, by Mr. Consul Charles Livingstone, Her Britannic Majesty's Consul, that empowered him to stop any white traders from establishing factories anywhere above Hippopotamus Creek, and under which he was empowered to stop and hold any vessel for a fine of one hundred puncheons of oil. In June, 1885, the traders applied to Mr. Consul White, who informed King Ja Ja that the Protectorate treaty meant freedom of navigation and trade.

So the traders finding their occupation gone, decided amongst themselves to take a trip to Ja Ja's markets, the only sensible thing they had done since the trouble commenced. This was a step in the right direction, namely,

by attempting to break down the curse of Western Africa *id est*, the power of the middle-man.

The names of the four traders who first attempted to trade in the Ibo markets of King Ja Ja deserve to be recorded, for their action was not without great risk to themselves. They were:

Mr. S. B. Hall
Mr. Thomas Wright } English
Mr. Richard Foster
Mr. A. E. Brunschweiler—Swiss.

To these must be added the name of Mr. F. D. Mitchell, who, though not in the first trip to the markets, joined in the subsequent attempt to establish business amongst the interior tribes. Their reception at the markets was not altogether a success, owing to the reception committee, or whatever represented it in those parts, being packed with either Ja Ja's own people or Ibos favourable to him.

This good beginning was continued under great difficulties by these first traders with little profit or success for about two years, owing to the great power of Ja Ja amongst the interior tribes and the pressure he was able to bring to bear on the Ibo and Kwo natives.

In the meantime, clouds had been gathering round the head of King Ja Ja. His wonderful success since 1870 had gradually obscured his former keen perception of how far his rights as a petty African king would be recognised by the English Government under the new order of things just being inaugurated in the Oil Rivers; honestly believing that in signing the Protectorate treaty of December 19th, 1884, with the *sixth* clause crossed out, he had retained the right given him by the commercial treaty of 1873 to

keep white men from proceeding to his markets, he got himself entangled in a number of disputes which culminated in his being taken out of the Opobo River in September, 1887, by Her Britannic Majesty's Consul, Mr. H. H. Johnston, C.B., now Sir Harry Johnston, and conveyed to Accra, where he was tried before Admiral Sir Hunt Grubbe, who condemned him to five years' deportation to the West Indies, making him an allowance of about £800 per annum and returning a fine of thirty puncheons of palm oil, value about £450 in those days, which the late Consul Hewett had imposed upon him, a fine that the Admiral did not think the Consul was warranted in having imposed.

Poor Ja Ja did not live to return to his country and his people whom he loved so well, and whose condition he had done so much to improve, though at times his rule often became despotic. One trait of his character may interest the public just now, as the Liquor Question in West Africa is so much *en evidence*, and that is, that he was a strict teetotaler himself and inculcated the same principles in all his chiefs. In his eighteen years' rule as a king in Opobo he reduced two of his chiefs for drunkenness—one he sent to live in exile in a small fishing village for the rest of his life, the other, who had aggravated his offence by assaulting a white trader, he had deprived of all outward signs of a chief and put in a canoe to paddle as a pull-away boy within an hour of his committing the offence.

During the Ashantee campaign of 1873 Sir Garnet Wolseley sent Captain Nicol to the Oil Rivers to raise a contingent of friendly natives ; on his arrival in Bonny he was not immediately successful, so continued on to

Opobo, where he was the guest of the writer. Upon Captain Nicol explaining his errand, Ja Ja furnished him with over sixty of his war-boys, most of whom had seen considerable fighting in the late war between Bonny and Opobo. The news reaching Bonny of what Ja Ja had done, put the Bonny men upon their mettle, and when Captain Nicol reached Bonny on his way back to Ashantee, he found a further contingent waiting for him from the Bonny chiefs.

This combined contingent did good work against the Ashantees, being favourably mentioned in despatches. Poor Captain Nicol, who raised them, and commanded them in most of their engagements with the enemy, was, I regret to say, killed whilst gallantly leading them on in one of the final rushes just before Coomassie was taken.

In recognition of the above services of his men, Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria presented King Ja Ja with a sword of honour, the King of Bonny receiving one at the same time.

Shipwrecked people were always sure of kindly treatment if they fell into the hands of Ja Ja's subjects, for he had given strict orders to his people dwelling on the sea-shore to assist vessels in distress and convey any one cast on shore to the European factories, warning them at the same time on no account to touch any of their property. He was also the first king in the Delta to restrain his people from plundering a wrecked ship, though the custom had been from time immemorial that a vessel wrecked upon their shores belonged to them by rights as being a gift from their Ju-Ju—an idea held by savage people in many other parts of the world.

It seems a pity that a man who had so many good

qualities should have ended as he did. He was a man who, properly handled. could have been made of much use in the opening up of his country. Unfortunately, the late Consul Hewett was prejudiced against Ja Ja from his first interview with him, finding in this nigger king a man of superior natural abilities to his own.

Had the late Mr. Consul Hewett had the fiftieth part of the ability in dealing with the natives his sub and successor, Mr. H. H. Johnston, showed, there would never have been any necessity to deport Ja Ja. Unfortunately, between Ja Ja's stubbornness and the late Consul Hewett's bungling, matters had come to such a pass that some decisive measures were actually necessary to uphold the dignity of the Consular Office.

When Mr. H. H. Johnston succeeded the late Mr. Consul Hewett, the Opobo palaver was in about as muddled a state as it was possible for it to have got into. Matters had been in an unsatisfactory state for some years between King Ja Ja and the late Consul. Ja Ja had over-stepped the bounds of propriety in more ways than one. He tried the same tactics with Mr. Johnston, who to look at, is the mildest-looking little man you can imagine, and therefore did not fill the native's eye as a ruler of men; but Mr. Johnston very soon let Ja Ja and the natives generally see he was made of different stuff to his predecessor, and the first attempts on Ja Ja's part not to act up to the lines he laid down for him settled his fate. Mr. Johnston offered him the choice of delivering himself up quietly as a prisoner or being treated as an enemy of the Queen, his town destroyed and himself eventually captured and exiled for ever. He elected to give himself up, was taken to Accra and there tried and

condemned after a fair hearing. I was present myself at the trial, and old friend as I was to him, I don't think the verdict would have been otherwise had I been in the judge's place, though there were many extenuating circumstances in his case, all of which were fully considered by Admiral Hunt Grubbe in his final sentence.

I feel confident that had Mr. Consul Johnston had the management of affairs in the Opobo a few years earlier, Ja Ja would never have been deported, and instead of having to censure him, he would have handled him in such a manner as to make use of his influence in furthering British interests. I do not think I can describe the late King Ja Ja better than Mr. Consul Johnston did in a letter he addressed to Lord Salisbury under date of September 24th, 1887, wherein he writes as follows:—"Ja Ja's chief friends and supporters for years past have been the naval officers on the coast. His generous hospitality, his frank, engaging manner, his naïf discourse, and amusing crudities of diction have gained the ready sympathy of these gentlemen; no doubt Ja Ja is no common man, though he is in origin a runaway slave,[1] he was cut out by nature for a king, and he has the instinct of rule, though it not unfrequently degenerates into cruel tyranny.

"His demeanour is marked by quiet dignity, and his appearance and conversation are impressive.

"Nevertheless, I know Ja Ja to be a deliberate liar,[2] who exhibits little shame or confusion when his falsehoods

[1] This is an error into which the late Consul Hewett no doubt led Mr. Johnston, as Ja Ja had been since 1861–2 a chief in Bonny and recognised as one of the regents of that place; originally a slave, I will admit, but not a runaway one.

[2] This failing is called diplomacy in civilised nations.

are exposed. He is a bitter and unscrupulous enemy[1] of all who attempt to dispute his trade monopolies, and the five British firms whose trade he has almost ruined during the past two years."

A complaint often made against the Government by merchants established on the West Coast of Africa is want of official protection and assistance; in many cases in the past this has been the case; but they certainly could not make this complaint during the few months that Mr. Consul Johnston was at the head of the Consular service in the Oil Rivers. I will here give a summary of what exertions were made by the Government to assist the merchants in their praiseworthy attempts to get behind the middlemen in this one river, where Ja Ja was always given the credit of being the head and front of the obstruction, nothing ever being said about the king and chiefs of Bonny, who were equally interested with Ja Ja in keeping the white men out of the markets, their principal markets being on the River Opobo.

Owing to the energetic representations of Mr. Consul H. H. Johnston, the British Government placed at his disposal for the settlement of the market question and the Ja Ja palaver the following Government vessels, viz., the *Watchful*, the *Goshawk*, the *Alecto*, the *Acorn*, the *Royalist*, and the *Raleigh*, the latter bringing Admiral Sir Hunt Grubbe up from the Cape of Good Hope for the trial of King Ja Ja.

Result: Within a very short time after the deportation of Ja Ja, all the firms who had been so anxious to establish

[1] Monopolies, have led Europeans on the West Coast of Africa to be equally as unscrupulous and bitter enemies of any one, white or black, who have attempted to dispute their trade monopolies.

in the interior markets and thus get behind the middlemen (without doubt the curse of the Oil Rivers and every part of Africa where they are tolerated) gave up trading at the interior markets that had caused the Government so much trouble to open for them, and made an agreement with the middlemen, represented in this case by the Bonny men and Opobo men, that they would not attempt to trade any more in the interior markets if the middlemen would promise to trade with no European firm that attempted to trade in the interior markets. On the writer's last visit to the Opobo in 1896 there was only one firm trading in the interior markets, and that firm was not one of those that were in the river at the time of the clamour for the removal of Ja Ja and the opening of the interior in 1887.

KWO IBO.

This river was first visited in modern days in 1871 by the late Mr. Archie McEachan, who found the people very troublesome to deal with, and did not long remain there. No doubt the people were not so easy to deal with as those natives that have been for some hundreds of years dealing with Europeans; but as he was at the same time posing as a friend and supporter of Ja Ja, and the oil he got in Kwo Ibo was being diverted from Ja Ja's markets, the latter no doubt exerted a certain amount of pressure on his friend, and aided, if he did not actually cause him to decide to withdraw from Kwo Ibo.

Kwo Ibo lay fallow for some time, then one or two Sierra Leone men attempted to trade there, but with little success, owing to the influence King Ja Ja had in the country. It was not until 1880–1 that any sustained

effort was made to trade in this river; but about this time a Mr. Watts established a small trading station there, and succeeded in creating a trade, though he had a very difficult task to combat the opposition of King Ja Ja, who considered he was being defrauded of some of his supposed just rights. Had Mr. Watts pushed his way into the interior markets and dealt direct with the producers, he would deserve the united thanks of every merchant connected with the trade in the Niger Delta; but he did not, and contented himself with buying his produce on a little better terms than he could have done in Opobo or Old Calabar, and created another set of middlemen, who to-day consider they, like their neighbours, are justified in doing their utmost in keeping the European out of the interior. Mr. Watts eventually sold out his interest in the trade of this river to the combination of river firms now known under the name of the African Association of Liverpool.

A mission has been established here for some years and I had the pleasure of meeting the missionary in charge, some two years ago, on his way home after a long sojourn in the Kwo Ibo; his description of the people and of the success of his mission work was most interesting. If he has returned to the seat of his labours and is still alive, I can only wish him every success in the work in which evidently his whole heart was centred.

The name Kwo Ibo, which has been given to this river, gives one the idea that the inhabitants are a mixture of Kwos and Ibos. This to a certain extent may be a very good description as regards the inhabitants of the upper reaches of the river, which takes its rise, so it is supposed, in a lake in the Ibo country, afterwards passing through

the Kwo, and discharges itself into the sea about half-way between the east point of the Opobo River and the Tom Shotts Point.

The lower part of the river is inhabited principally by Andoni men by origin, but calling themselves Ibenos or Ibrons.

These people deserve a great deal of credit for the plucky manner in which they withstood the numerous attacks the late King Ja Ja made upon them, and their stubborn refusal to discontinue trading with the white men established in their river, though they were but ill-provided with arms to defend themselves. During several years they must have suffered severely from the repeated raids the late King Ja Ja made upon them, not only from losses in battle, but also in having their towns destroyed and many of their people carried off as prisoners. Some of the earlier raids made by Ja Ja, I must in fairness to him say, were to a great extent brought on by the actions of the Ibrons themselves, who were not slow to attack and slay any Opobo men they caught wandering about, if the latter were not in sufficient numbers to defend themselves.

In language, these people are closely allied to the old Calabar people, and many of their customs show them to have had more communication with those people than they have had with the Andoni people, at any rate for many years. I find no mention amongst the writings of the early travellers to Western Africa of their having visited this river, nor is it even named on any old chart that I have consulted, though on some I have seen a river indicated at the spot where the Kwo Ibo enters the sea.

Needless to mention, they were, and the majority are

to-day, steeped in Ju-Juism, witchcraft, and their attendant horrors.

The Kwo people, whose country lies on both sides of the Kwo Ibo, and behind the Ibenos, are the tribe from whom were drawn the supplies of Kwo or Kwa slaves known under the name of the Mocoes in the West Indies.

OLD CALABAR.

I now come to the last river in the Niger Coast Protectorate, both banks of which belong to England, the next river being the Rio del Rey, of which England now only claims the right bank, Germany claiming the left and all the territory south to the river Campo, a territory almost as large as, if not equal to, the whole of the Niger Coast Protectorate, which ought to have been English, for was it not English by right of commercial conquest, if by no other, and for years had been looked upon by the commanders of foreign naval vessels as under English influence?

Owing to some one blundering, this nice slice of African territory was allowed to slip into the hands of the Germans, hence my account of the Oil Rivers ought to be called an account of the Oil Rivers reduced by Germany.

In speaking of the inhabitants of this river, I must also include the people who inhabit the lower part of the Cross River. This explanation would not have been necessary some few years ago, but I notice the more recent hydrographers make the Cross River the main river and the Old Calabar only a tributary of that river, which is, without doubt, the most correct.

The principal towns are Duke Town (where are to be found nowadays the headquarters of the Niger Coast

Protectorate, the Presbyterian Mission, and the principal trading factories of the Europeans), Henshaw Town, Creek and Town; besides these, the various kings and chiefs have numberless small towns and villages in the environs. In the lower part of the Cross river are many fishing villages, the inhabitants of which are looked upon as Old Calabar people, and owing to the latter being the dominant race they have to-day lost, or very nearly so, any trace of their forefathers, who I believe to have been Kwos with a strong strain of Andoni blood.

These villages did, in days anterior to the advent of the European traders, an immense business with the interior in dried shrimps, the latter being used by the natives, not only as a flavouring to their stews and ragouts, but as a substitute for the all necessary salt.

The original inhabitants of the district now occupied by the Old Calabar people were the Akpas, whom the Calabarese drove out, and to a great extent afterwards absorbed. This immigration of the Calabarese is said to have taken place very little over one hundred and fifty years ago. Originally coming from the upper Ibibio district of the Cross River, they belong to the Efik race, and speak that language, though nowadays, owing to numerous intermarriages with Cameroon natives and the great number of slaves bought from the Cameroons district, they are of very mixed blood. Most of the kings and chiefs of Old Calabar owe their rank and position to direct descent, some of them being of ancient lineage, a fact of which they are very proud. In this respect they differ in a great measure from their neighbours in Bonny and Opobo, where, oftener than otherwise, the succession falls to the most influential man in the House, slave or free-born.

The principal town of these people boasted, some few years ago, of many very nice villa residences, belonging to the chiefs, built of wood, and roofed with corrugated iron, mostly erected by a Scotch carpenter, who had established himself in Old Calabar, and who was in great request amongst the chiefs as an architect and builder. Unfortunately, these houses being erected haphazard amongst the surrounding native-built houses did not lend that air of improvement to the town they might otherwise have done if the chiefs had studied more uniformity in the building of the town, and arranged for wide streets in place of alley ways, many of which are not wide enough to let two Calabar ladies of the higher rank pass one another without the risk of their finery being daubed with streaks of yellow mud from the adjacent walls.

The native houses of the better classes are certainly an improvement upon any others in the Protectorate, showing as they do some artistic taste in their embellishments. They are generally built in the form of a square or several squares, more or less exact, according to the extent of ground the builder has to deal with and the number of apartments the owner has need for. In some cases, I have seen a native commence his building operations by marking out two or three squares or oblongs, about twenty feet by fifteen, round which he would build his various apartments or rooms. In the centre of the inner squares, which are always left open to the sky, you almost invariably find a tree growing, either left there purposely when clearing the ground, or planted by the owner; occasionally you will find a fine crop of charms and Ju-Jus hanging from the branches of these trees.

The inner walls, especially of the courtyards, are in most

cases tastefully decorated with paintings, somewhat resembling the arabesque designs one sees amongst the Moors. No doubt this art and that of designing fantastic figures on brass dishes, which they buy from the Europeans and afterwards embellish with the aid of a big-headed nail and a hammer, comes to them from the Mohammedans of the Niger, of whom they used to see a good deal in former days.

With regard to the dress of these people, I have not anything so interesting to relate about them as I had of the New Calabar gentlemen. Except on high days and holidays, there is little to distinguish the upper classes here from the same classes in any of the other rivers of the Protectorate, except that it might be in the peculiar way they knot the loin cloth on, leaving it to trail a little on the ground on one side, and their great liking for scarlet and other bright coloured stove-pipe hats. On their high festivals the kings appear in crowns and silk garments; the chiefs, who do not stick to the native gala garments of many-hued silks, generally appear in European clothes, not always of irreproachable fit, their queen, as every chief calls his head wife, appearing in a gorgeous silk costume that may have been worn several seasons before at Ascot or Goodwood by a London belle. Sometimes you may be treated to the sight of a dusky queen gaily displaying her ample charms in a low-cut secondhand dinner or ball dress that may have created a sensation when first worn at some swagger function in London or Paris. As the native ladies do not wear stays, and one of the greatest attributes of female beauty in Calabar is plumpness, and plenty of it, you may imagine that the local *modiste* has her wits greatly exercised in devising means to fill up the gaping space between the hooks and eyes. I once heard a

captain of one of the mail steamers describe this job as "letting in a graving piece down the back."

One of the customs peculiar to the Old Calabar people, practised generally amongst all classes, but most strictly observed by the wealthier people, is for a girl about to become a bride to go into retirement for several weeks just previous to her marriage, during which time she undergoes a fattening treatment, similar to that practised in Tunis. The fatter the bride the more she is admired. It is said that during this seclusion the future bride is initiated into the mysteries of some female secret society. Many of the chiefs are very stout, and given to *embonpoint*, a fact of which they are very proud.

The lower-class women are not troubled with too much clothing, but still ample enough for the country and decency's sake. As one strolls through the town to see the market or pay a visit to some chief, one often encounters young girls, and sometimes women, in long, loose, flowing robes, fitting tight round the neck, and on inquiring who these are, the reply generally comes, "Dem young gal be mission gal, dem tother one he be Saleone woman."

The mission here is the United Presbyterian Mission of Scotland,[1] and a great deal of good has been done by it for these people, and is being done now, and great hopes are expected from their industrial mission, started only a few years ago, therefore, it would be unfair to make further comment on the latter; it is a step in the right direction.

Some of the missionaries to Old Calabar have put in about forty years of active service, most of it passed on the coast. Amongst others who have lived to a great age in

[1] Established in Old Calabar in 1846.

this mission should be mentioned the Rev. Mr. Anderson, who lived to the advanced age of between eighty and ninety years, greatly respected by both the European and native population. Amongst the lady missionaries the name of Miss Slessor stands out very prominently, and, considering the task she has set herself, viz., the saving of twin children and protection of their mothers, her success has been marvellous, for the Calabarese is, like his neighbours, still a great believer in the custom that says twin children are not to be allowed to live. This lady has passed about twenty years in Old Calabar, a greater part of the last ten years all alone at Okÿon, a district which the people of Duke Town and the surrounding towns preferred not to visit, if they could manage any business they had with the people of Okÿon without going amongst them. Many of these old customs will now be much more quickly stamped out than in the past, owing to the fact that it is in the power of the Consul-General to punish the natives severely who practise them. The preaching and exhortation of the missionaries to the people in the past was met by the very powerful argument, in a native's mind, that "it was a custom his father had kept from time immemorial, and he did not see why he should not continue it," the Ju-Ju priests being clever enough to point out to the natives that, though the missionaries preached against Ju-Juism, they could not punish its votaries. But that is all changed now, and even the Ju-Ju priests begin to feel that the power of the Consul-General is much greater than that of their grinning idols and trickery.

Though these people have been in communication with Europeans for at least two centuries, and under British influence for upwards of sixty years, and a mission has

been established in their principal town for the best part of fifty years, it was a common thing to see human flesh offered for sale in the market within a very few years of the establishment of the British Protectorate.

In judging the result of missionary effort in this river, or, in fact, any other part of Western Africa, one is apt to exclaim, "What poor results for so much expenditure in lives and money!" The cause is not far to seek if one knows the native, and has sufficiently studied his ways and customs as to be able to understand or read what is working in his brain.

The upper or dominant classes, consisting of the kings, the chiefs, the petty chiefs and the trade boys (the latter being the traders sent into the far distant markets to buy the produce for their masters, and it is from this class that many of the chiefs in most of these rivers spring) are all, to a man, working either openly or secretly against the missionaries. Even when they have become converts and communicants, in very many cases they are as much an opponent as ever of the missionary. I can fancy I see some enthusiastic missionary jumping up with indignation depicted in every feature to tell me I am not telling the truth about his particular converts. Well, as I expect to be called a liar, I have taken care to admit that a very few converts are not opposed to the missionary, in order that I may say to any missionary that particularly wishes to wipe the floor with me that perchance his special converts are included in the minority that is represented by the very few cases where the convert is wholly and solely for the mission.

What are the causes that lead these people to work against the missions? First and foremost is Ju-Ju and its

multifarious ramifications, consisting of Ju-Ju priests of the district, the Ju-Ju priests of the surrounding country, and the travelling Ju-Ju men, described by the natives as witch doctors, who keep up a communication of ideas and thought from end to end of the pagan countries of West and South-West Africa.

Secondly, not only is the teaching of Christianity opposed to Ju-Juism, but it is also opposed to the whole fabric of native customs other than Ju-Juism. Polygamy, for example, is an actual necessity, according to native custom, thus a wife after the birth of an infant retires from the companionship of her husband and devotes herself for the following two years to the cares of nursing. Then, again, at certain times, according to native custom, a woman is not allowed to prepare food that has to be eaten by others than herself. This would place the man with only one wife in a peculiar position, as it is a general custom in all these rivers, from the kings downwards, to have their food cooked by one of their wives. This custom arises from the fact that poisoning is known to be very much practised amongst all the Pagan tribes, and experience has taught the men that their greatest safety lies in the faithfulness of their wives, for the wives are aware that they have all to lose and nothing to gain by the death of their husbands.

Many people who have visited Western Africa will say that the reports of secret poisoning on the coast are travellers' yarns; but to refute that I will here describe a custom met with still in many places on the coast, and invariably practised amongst all natives in the purely native towns in the immediate vicinity of the coast towns. Even the coast towns people practise it still in

every case amongst themselves and in some cases with the Europeans. Of course, I don't say that the educated negro or coloured missionary will do it with Europeans, but many of the educated natives will do it with the uneducated native, and this custom is that your native host will never offer you food or drink without first tasting it to show you it is not poisoned. While I am on this topic, let me give any would-be travellers amongst the Pagans a bit of advice. Once they strike in amongst the purely native, always follow this custom; it will do no harm and may save them from unpleasant experiences.

Thirdly, the native instinct of self-preservation is as much the first law of nature to the negro as it is to the rest of mankind. At first sight it might be said, "Where is the link between self-preservation and missionary effort, and how comes it to work against the missions?" I will try to explain this point as clearly as possible.

Naturally the first people the missionary came in contact with were the coast tribes. These people, in almost if not every case, are non-producers, being simply the brokers between the white man and the interior; in not a few cases behind the coast tribes are other tribes who are again non-producers and are the brokers of the coast brokers, or make the coast brokers pay a tribute to them for passing through their country. No place so well illustrated this system as the trade on the lower Niger as it used to be conducted by the Brass, New Calabar and Bonny men. Previous to the advent of the Royal Niger Company in that river, these people paid a small tribute to perhaps a dozen different towns on their way up to Abo on the Niger—some of the Brass men used even to get as far as Onicha or Onitsha. Now that the Royal Niger Company

is trading on the Niger, none of these people can go to the Niger to trade. Well, there you have one of the great objections to mission effort. Each of these small tribes who were non-producers have lost the tribute they used to exact from the Brass, Bonny and New Calabar native brokers, therefore all the non-producers are averse to the white man passing beyond them, be he missionary or trader. Of course, the greatest objectors to the white man penetrating into the interior are the coast middlemen, for it strikes at once at the source of all their riches, all the grandeur of their chieftainship, and for the rising generation all hope of their ever arriving to be a chief like their father or their masters, and have a large retinue of slaves, for the favourite slaves are in no way anxious to see slavery abolished, because with its abolition they only foresee ruin to their ambitious views.

Thus you will understand me when I point out to you the weak spot in nine-tenths of the mission effort. They have been trying to look after the negro's soul and teaching him Christianity, which in the native mind is cutting at the root, not only of all their ancient customs, but actually aims at taking away their living without attempting to teach them any industrial pursuit which may help them in the struggle for life, which is daily getting harder for our African brethren as it is here in England.

When I am speaking of mission effort I ought to include Government effort in the older colonies. No attempt has been made, as far as I am aware of, to open technical schools or to assist the natives to learn how to earn their living other than by being clerks or petty traders.

SECRET SOCIETIES AND FESTIVALS IN OLD CALABAR—AND THE COUNTRIES UP THE CROSS RIVER

To describe all the customs of the Old Calabar people would take up more space than I am allowed to monopolise in this work.

They have numerous plays or festivals, in which they delight to disguise themselves in masks of the most grotesque ugliness. These masks are, in most cases, of native manufacture, and seem always to aim at being as ugly as possible. I never have seen any attempt on the part of a native manufacturer of masks to produce anything passably good looking.

Egbo, the great secret society of these people, is a sort of freemasonry, having, I believe, seven or nine grades. To attempt to describe the inner working of this society would be impossible for me, as I do not belong to it. Though several Europeans have been admitted to some of the grades, none have ever, to my knowledge, succeeded in being initiated to the higher grades. The uses of this society are manifold, but the abuses more than outweigh any use it may have been to the people. As an example, I may mention the use which a European would make of his having Egbo, viz., if any native owed him money or its equivalent, and was in no hurry to pay, the European would blow[1] Egbo on the debtor, and that man could not leave his house until he had paid up. Egbo could be, and was, used for matters of a much more serious nature than

[1] It is called blowing Egbo because notice is given of the Egbo law being set in motion against any one by one of the myrmidons of Egbo blowing the Egbo horn before the party's house.

the above, such as the ruin of a man if a working majority could be got together against him. This society could work much more swiftly than the course adopted in other rivers to compass a man's downfall ; *vide* Will Braid's trouble with his brother chiefs in New Calabar.

The country up the Cross River, which is the main stream into the interior, improves a very few miles after leaving Old Calabar ; in fact, the mangrove disappears altogether within twenty miles of Duke Town, being replaced by splendid forest trees and many clearings, the latter being, in some instances, the farms of Old Calabar chiefs. On arriving at Ikorofiong, which is on the right bank of the river, you find yourself on the edge of the Ikpa plain, which extends away towards Opobo as far as the eye can see. I visited this place thirty-five years ago, and stayed for a couple of days in the mission house, the gentleman then in charge being a Dr. Bailey. At that time this was the farthest station of the Old Calabar mission ; since then they have established themselves in Umon, and have done great service amongst these people, who were previously to the advent of the mission terribly in the toils of their Ju-Ju priests. The people of Umon speak a language quite different from the Calabarese. Umon is about one hundred miles by water from Old Calabar.

Twenty or thirty miles further up the Cross River you come to the Akuna-Kuna country, inhabited by a very industrious race of people, great producers and agriculturists, and having abundance of cattle, sheep, goats and poultry. These people received one of Her Majesty's consuls with such joy and good feeling, and so loaded him with presents of farm produce, that his Kroo boatmen suffered severely from indigestion while they remained in the Akuna-Kuna

country. A little farther up the river is the town of Ungwana, a mile or so beyond which is now to be found a mission station. This district is called Iku-Morut, and a few years ago the inhabitants were never happy unless they were at war with the Akuna-Kuna people. This state of things has been much modified by the presence in the country of protectorate officials.

About sixty miles by river beyond Iku-Morut is the town Ofurekpe, in the Apiapam district. This place, its chief and people are everything to be desired, the town is clean, the houses are commodious, the inhabitants are friendly, and their country is delightful. They are a little given to cannibalism, but, I am very credibly informed, only practise this custom on their prisoners of war.

Beyond this point the river passes through the Atam district, a country inhabited, so I was informed, by the most inveterate of cannibals. Not having visited these people, I am not able to speak from personal experience; but as I have generally found in Western Africa that a country bearing a very bad character does not always deserve all that is said against it, I shall give this country the benefit of the doubt, and say that once the natives get accustomed to having white people visit them, and have got over the fearful tales told them by the interested middlemen about the ability of the white men to witch them by only looking at them, then they will be as easy to deal with, if not easier, than the knowing non-producers.

I know of one interior town, not in Old Calabar, where the principal chief had given a warm welcome to a white man and allotted him a piece of ground to build a factory which he was to return and build the following dry

season. Before the time had elapsed the chief died, without doubt poisoned by some interested middleman. When the white man went up to the country according to his agreement, the new chief would not allow him to land, and accused him of having bewitched the late chief. The white trader was an old bird and not easily put off any object he had in view, so stuck to his right of starting trade in the country, and by liberal presents to the new chief at last succeeded in commencing operations, with the result that the new chief died in a very short time and the white man, who was put in charge of the factory, was shot dead whilst passing through a narrow creek on his way to see his senior agent, this being done in the interior country so as to throw the blame upon the people he was trading with. No one saw who fired the fatal shot, and the body was never recovered, as the boys who were with him were natives belonging to the coast people and in their fright capsized the small canoe he was travelling in, so they reported; but some months after the white man's ring mysteriously turned up, the tale being it was found in the stomach of a fish.

I will here describe one other very practical custom that used to be observed all over the Old Calabar and Cross River district, but which has disappeared in the lower parts of the river, owing no doubt to the efforts of the missionaries having been successful in instilling into the native mind a greater respect for their aged relatives than formerly existed. If it ever occurs nowadays in the Calabar district it can only take place in some out of the way village far away in the bush, from whence news of a little matter of this kind might take months to reach the ears of the Government or the missionary; but this custom is still

carried on in the Upper Cross River, and consists in helping the old and useless members of the village or community out of this world by a tap on the head, their bodies are then carefully smoke-dried, afterwards pulverised, then formed into small balls by the addition of water in which Indian corn has been boiled for hours—this mixture is allowed to dry in the sun or over fires, then put away for future use as an addition to the family stew.

With all the cannibalistic tastes that these people have been credited with, I have only heard of them once ever going in for eating white men, and this occurred previous to the arrival in the Old Calabar river of the Efik race, if we are to trust to what tradition tells us. It appears that in 1668–9 four English sailors were captured by the then inhabitants of the Old Calabar River; three of them were immediately killed and eaten, the fourth being kept for a future occasion. Whether it was that being sailors, and thus being strongly impregnated with salt horse, tobacco and rum, their flesh did not suit the palate of these natives I know not, but it is on record that the fourth man was not eaten, but kindly treated, and some years after, when another English ship visited the river, he was allowed to return to England in her. Since that date, as far as I know, no white men have ever been molested by the Old Calabar people.

There has been occasionally a little friction between traders and natives, but nothing very serious, though it is said some queer transactions were carried on by the white men during the slave-dealing days.

APPENDIX II

PART I

A VOYAGE TO THE AFRICAN OIL RIVERS TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO. BY JOHN HARFORD

IT was in the month of December, 1872, when I with seventeen others left our good old port of Bristol bound for one of the West African oil rivers on a trading voyage. It was a splendid morning for the time of year: bright, fine, and clear, when we were towed through our old lock gates, with the hearty cheers, good-byes, and God-speed-yous from our friends ringing in the air; and although there were some of us made sad by the parting kiss, which to many was the last on this earth, there was one whose heart felt so glad that he has often described the day as being one of the happiest in his life, and that one was your humble servant, the writer. Our first start was soon delayed, as we had to anchor in King Road and wait a fair wind. And now a word to any hearers who may be about to start on a new venture. Always wait for a fair wind—when that comes make the best use you can of it. Our fair wind came after some two weeks, and lasted long enough for us to get clear of the English land; but before we were clear of the Irish, we encountered head winds again. Being too far out to return, we had to beat our ship about under close reefed

topsails for another week. This was a rough time for all on board. At last the wind changed, and we this time succeeded in clearing the Bay of Biscay and then had a fairly fine run until we reached St. Antonia, one of the Cape de Verde Islands. This we sighted early one morning, and in the brilliant tropical sunshine it appeared to me almost a heavenly sight. We soon passed on, the little island disappeared, and once more our bark seemed to be alone on the mighty ocean. After a week or so we sighted the mainland of that great and wonderful continent Africa—wonderful, I say, because it has been left as if it were unknown for centuries, while countries not nearly its equal in any way have had millions spent upon them. Our first land fall was a port of Liberia. Liberia, I must tell you, is part of the western continent with a seaboard of some miles. It was taken over by the American Republic and made a free country for all those slaves that were liberated in the time of the great emancipation brought about by that good man William E. Channing. Here, on their own land, these people, who years before had been kidnapped from their homes, were once more free.

After a week's buffeting about with cross currents and very little wind we at last reached the noted headland of Cape Palmas, a port of Liberia; we anchored here for one night and next morning were under way again. This time, having a fair wind and the currents with us, we soon made our next stopping place, which was a little village on the coast-line called Beraby. Here we had our first glimpse of African life. Directly we dropped anchor a sight almost indescribable met the eye of what appeared to be hundreds of large blackbirds in the water. We had not long to wait before we knew it was something more than black-

birds, for soon the ship was crowded from stem to stern with natives from the shore jabbering away in such a manner very alarming to a new-comer. I am not ashamed to confess that I was anything but sorry when the ship was cleared and we were off once more; this was soon done as we had only to take on board our Kroo men, or boys, as they are always called, although some of them are as finely built as ever a man could wish to be. We took about twenty of these boys, who engage for the voyage and become, like ourselves, part of the ship's crew. After each one had received one month's pay from our captain, and duly handed it over to their friends, and said their good-byes, general good-wishes were given, and we again up anchor, and set sail for the well-known port of Half Jack, which ought to be called the Bristol port of Half Jack, for here we met some half-dozen Bristol ships, who gave our captain a regular good old Bristol welcome.

A few words about this important port may be of interest, although I am sorry to say we have managed to let it, valuable as it is, get into the hands of the French, like many more in that part. Half Jack is a very low-lying country with a large lagoon, as it is called running, between it and the mainland. Along the sides of this lagoon the country villages are situated, which produce that great product palm oil; this is sold to the Half Jack men, who in turn sell to our Bristol men and they ship it to all parts of Europe. We now leave Half Jack to its traders and natives, and after our captain has paid his complimentary visits, we set sail for the Gold Coast town of Accra; but before reaching that, we have to pass many fine ports and splendid headlands. Axim, in particular, I must mention, as it has recently come very much to the fore, owing to the great quantity of

mahogany that is now being exported from there, a wood that has revolutionised the furniture industries of this country—it has also enabled the thrifty men and women of England to make their homes more bright and cheerful by giving them the very cheap and beautiful furniture they could not have dreamed of years ago, when the only mahogany procurable was the black Spanish, which was far too expensive for ordinary persons to think about. Axim, in addition to this great export of wood, is the port of departure for the West African gold mines, and they will I have no doubt, in time prove of great value. The Ancobra River empties itself here. Axim being at its mouth, this river would be very useful in helping to develop the interior of this part, were it not that the mouth was so shallow and dangerous, two obstacles that the science of the future will, I expect, remove. We are now passing some of the finest specimens of coast scenery it is possible to see. I can better describe it by comparing it somewhat to our North Devon and Cornwall coasts, such splendid rocks and headlands and land that I venture to say will eventually prove very valuable.

We next come to the important town of Elmina, one of the departure ports of the Ashantee country, and also where all noted prisoners are kept. King Prempeh, late of Ashantee, is now awaiting her Majesty's pleasure there; many others have found Elmina their home of detention after attempting to disobey our gracious Queen's commands.

Cape Coast Castle is our next noted place. This is the chief departure port for the Ashantee country, and was at one time the Government seat for the Gold Coast Colony. It is a very fine rock-bound port, and from the sea its

square-topped, white-washed houses, and its Castle on the higher promontory, form an imposing-looking picture. It is second to Accra for importance in this part; much gold comes from here. It is also a celebrated place for the African-made gold jewellery, some of which is very beautiful in design and workmanship. The grey parrots form a great article of barter here. Hundreds of these birds are brought to Liverpool every week, I may almost say all from this place. The people are chiefly of the Fantee tribe, and a fine and intelligent race they are. They have good schools, and many of the younger men ship off to other parts of the coast as clerks, &c. Good cooks may be engaged from here, which is a fact I think well worth mentioning.

And now we sail on to the present seat of Government for the Gold Coast Colony, Accra. This is a fine country, a flat, table-like land along the front, with the hills of the hinterland rising in the background. The landing here is somewhat dangerous in the rough season, and great care has to be taken by the men handling the surf-boats to avoid them capsizing. Many lives have been lost here in days gone by.

I told you before why we called at the Kroo village Beraby, and the port of Half Jack. We now anchored at Accra to engage our black mechanics, for which the place is noted. Here you may procure any kind of mechanic you may mention—coopers, carpenters, gold-and silver-smiths, blacksmiths, &c. In those early days the coopers and carpenters were engaged to assist our Bristol men, but to-day the whole of the work is done by the natives themselves. I do not think you would find a white cooper or carpenter in any of the lower ports, some of the natives

being very clever with their tools. We also engaged our cooks, steward, and laundry men, which any establishment of any size in these parts must keep. For all these trades the natives have to thank chiefly the Basel Mission, which is, I believe, of Swiss origin. This mission started years ago to not only teach the boys the word of God, but to teach them at the same time to use their hands and brains in such a way that they were bound to become of some use to their fellow men, and command ready employment. This mission, I cannot help feeling, has been one of the greatest blessings they have ever had on that great continent. It has sent out hundreds of men to all parts, and to-day the whole of the West Coast is dependent upon Accra for its skilled labour. This way of instructing the natives is now, I am pleased to say, being followed by nearly all our missionary societies, and it is certainly one of the best means of civilising a great people like the Africans are.

Not to take powder and shot and shoot them down because they don't understand our Christian law, but teach them how to make and construct, that they in time may become useful citizens, and that they may be better able to learn the value of the many valuable products growing in their midst, they will be ever thankful to us and bless our advent among them. These Accra people are a very fine race, clean, and distinctly above the ordinary type of negro, clearer cut features, well-built men and women. The women, especially, are superior to any of the West Africans I have met with up to the present. They, like their husbands, are fond of dress, and, like their husbands too, are hard-working and industrious; this was shown by the readiness of these people to undertake the porterage

in the prompt manner they did for the late Ashantee Expedition, and which must have done a great deal towards bringing about the success of the same. You will be better able to understand this if you will suppose, we will say, six thousand men were landed at Land's End, their destination being Bristol, and with no train or horse to carry the food supply and ammunition, let alone the heavy guns. For this work some thousands of porters are required, each one of which must carry from 60 to 100 pounds in weight. This is carried on the head, and when I tell you these people think nothing of doing twenty miles a day, day after day, you will realise how physically strong they must be. The manner in which they rallied round the Government—men, women, and children—as soon as it was decided an expedition should be sent, must have been very encouraging to those in command.

One thing, however, about these Accra people, while they have very much improved themselves in their dress they have not improved their villages as much as we would wish to see, but this will all come in time. Our old towns used to abound in narrow courts and lanes, while we to-day like to see open spaces, broad streets, &c., with plenty of fresh air, knowing it is an absolute necessity to us, and it should be the first care of our councillors to do away as far as possible with all dens and alleys, so that if the cottage is small, the cottager can breathe pure, fresh air; for, as you all know, the working man's stock-in-trade is his health—when that goes, the cupboard is often bare.

Now, I think it is about time we hove anchor and said good-bye to Accra. Our coopers and carpenters are engaged, and our crew being completed we set sail for our destination.

After being some four or five days crossing the Bight of Biafra, we sighted the island of Fernando Po. Here our captain having to do a little business, we anchor for the night in the harbour of Santa Isabel. The little island of Fernando Po once belonged to us, but we exchanged it some years ago with the Spanish Government for another island in the West Indies, which our Government thought of more value. This, as far as the West Coast was concerned, was a pity, because at the time I am speaking of the island was a flourishing place, with about half-a-dozen or so English merchants, and a fairly good hotel; but not so now, for while there is still business going on, the place is not advancing, and a place that does not advance must go back. The chief merchants there to-day are English. This the Spanish would not have if they could help it, but being under certain obligations to them they suffer them to remain.

The first view of Fernando Po when you arrive in the bay is a perfect picture; it makes one almost feel they would never like to leave there; its white houses all round the front on the higher level, its wharves and warehouses at the bottom, and its beautiful mountain rising magnificently in the background. Its whole appearance is very similar to the island of Teneriffe. It seems strange that here, almost in the middle of the tropics, if you have any desire to feel an English winter, you have only to go to the top of the Fernando Po mountain, which can easily be done in two days, or even less, for while at the foot the thermometer is registering 85° or 90° in the shade, on the top there is always winter cold and snow.

Now, I think we had better continue our journey. We took a few passengers on board, and then set sail for the

Cameroon River. This being only fifty or sixty miles distant, we were not long before we came to anchor off what is called the Dogs' Heads. Here we had to wait the flood, and almost three-quarter tide, to enable our ship to pass safely over a shallow part of the river called the flats. Now we come in sight of the then noted King Bell's Town, called after a king of that name. Here our ship is moored with two anchors, and here she has to remain until the whole of her cargo has been purchased. This was done, and is even to-day, by barter, that is exchanging the goods our ship has brought out for the products of the country, which at that time consisted only of palm oil, ivory, and cocoa-nuts; but before we commence to trade the ship has to be dismantled—top spars and yards taken down, and carefully put away with the rigging and running gear; spars are then run from mast to mast, and bow to stern, forming a ridge pole; then rafters are fastened to these coming down each side, supported by a plate running along the side, supported by upright posts or stanchions; the rafters are then covered with split — bamboos, over these are placed mats made from the bamboo and palm trees. It takes, of course, some thousands of mats to cover the ship all over, but this is done in about a month, and all by natives who are engaged for that particular work and belonging to that place. Our ship now being housed in, all hands who have not been sent to assist in taking another ship to England are given their different duties to assist the captain in carrying on the trade.

TRADING IN THE CAMEROONS

Each ship in those days had what was then called a cask house, that was a piece of land as nearly opposite as possible to where the ship lay moored. This land was always kept fenced round with young mangrove props or sticks, forming a compound; inside this compound would be two, perhaps three, fairly good sized stores or warehouses, and also an open shed for empty casks which had to be filled with palm oil and stowed in the ship for the homeward voyage. Now the first work to be done after the ship was made ready for trading, was to land as much of her cargo as was not immediately required for trading purposes, such as salt, caskage, earthenware, and all heavy goods. Salt in those days, as in the present, formed one of the staple articles of trade, therefore a ship would generally have from 200 to 300 tons of this on board, all of which would have to be landed into one of these store houses. At that time that meant a lot of labour, as every pound had to be carried by the natives from the boats to the store in baskets upon the head, over a long flat beach. To-day all this is altered, the salt is sent out in bags, and each store has a good iron wharf running out into the river with trolly lines laid upon it, which runs the goods right into the store, and so saves an immense amount of labour. After the salt came the casks, packed in what are called shooks; that is, the cask when emptied at home here, is knocked down and made into a small close package and in that condition only taking up an eighth part of the room it would take when filled with the palm oil, thus enabling the ship to carry, in addition to her cargo, enough casks to fill her up again completely

when filled with oil. To carry on this work the crew of the ship was divided into two parts, one to work on board, the other on shore. The shore work was generally allotted to the Kroo boys we engaged up the coast, with one of the white men in charge, while the white crew with three or four natives would work the ship. In addition to all this work, trade would be going on every day, which meant 100 or so natives coming and going constantly from half-past five in the morning until three or four in the afternoon, when trade would cease for the day. This release, I need scarcely tell you, was most welcome to us all, for during the whole of this time the ship was nothing but a continual babel, which not unfrequently ended in a free fight all round, when, of course, a little force had to be used to restore quiet.

The trading would be carried on in this way. The after end of the ship was partitioned off and made to resemble a shop as nearly as possible, in this were displayed goods of all kinds and descriptions too numerous to mention here. In front of this shop, at a small table, the captain sat, while an assistant would be in the shop ready to pass any goods that were required out to the purchasers, who first had to take their produce, whatever it might be, to the mate, who would be on the main deck to examine the oil and see that it was clean and free from dirt of any kind; he would also measure whatever was brought by the natives, then give them a receipt, or what was commonly called a book. This book was taken to the captain, who would ask what they required. All that could be paid for from the shop was handed over, while for the heavy goods another receipt or book was given which had to be handed to the man in charge of the store on the beach, who gave the native his

requirements there. So the work would go on from day to day, and month to month, until the whole of the ship's cargo had been bought, then the mat roof was taken off, masts and spars rigged up, sails bent and the ship made ready to sail for Old England. This, I must tell you, was a happy time for all on board, after lying, as we often did, some fourteen or fifteen months in the manner I have described. During these long months many changes took place; some of our crew fell ill with fever, and worst of all dysentery, one of the most terrible diseases that had to be contended with at that time. Three of our number, one after the other, we had to follow to the grave, while others were brought down to a shadow.

Here I experienced my first attack of African fever, which laid me low for some two weeks. I remember quite well getting out of my bed for the first time; I had no idea I had been so ill; I could not stand, so had to return to my berth again. This was a rough time for us—we had no doctor, and very little waiting upon, I can tell you. If the constitution of the sufferer was not strong enough to withstand the attack he generally had to go under, as it was impossible for the captain to look after the sick and do his trade as well, and as he was the only one supposed to know anything about medicine, it was a poor look out. (I have known, after a ship had been out a few months, not a white man able to do duty out of the whole of the crew.) These were our hard times, as, in addition to working all day, the white crew had to keep the watch on board through the night, while the Kroo boys did the same on shore. So that when any of our men were ill, the watch had to be kept by the two or three that were able. Many a night after a hard day's work I have fallen fast asleep as soon as I had received my in-

structions from the man I relieved. I fear my old captain got to know this, for he used to come on deck almost always in my watch, and sometimes ask me the time, which I very rarely could tell him. One night he caught me nicely. I was fast asleep, when suddenly I felt something very peculiar on my face. I put my hands up to rub my eyes as one does when just awakening, and, to my horror, my face was covered with palm oil, our captain standing at the cabin door laughing away. "What is the matter?" he said; "has anything happened?" "Yes," I replied; "you have given me the contents of the oil-can." I need scarcely tell you I did not sleep much on watch after that. The wonder to me now is that we did not lose more lives during that trying time.

Rumours of wars, as they were called, amongst the natives occasionally reached us, but we were left pretty much unmolested. One day the captain and I had a free fight with fifty or sixty natives, some of whom had stolen a cask from our store, which I happened to discover. We got our cask back and a few of them had more than they bargained for. Another time while I was on board a ship fitting out for home, the captain of her saw a native chief coming alongside who was heavily in his debt, so he made up his mind, without saying a word to any one, to make him a prisoner, so he invited him downstairs to have a glass of wine, leaving the forty or so people who had accompanied their chief in his canoe on deck. The captain then quietly locked him up, the chief shouted for assistance, his people rushed down and the tables were soon turned, for they took the captain prisoner and nearly killed him into the bargain, one man striking him with a sword nearly severed his hand from his arm, the two or three whites on board were powerless.

The natives having taken complete charge of the ship, we managed to hoist our flag for assistance, which was soon at hand, but too late to be of any use, for as soon as they had liberated their chief from his imprisonment, they all made off as quickly as they could to their own village. The captain was of course greatly to blame for not saying a word to any of us of his intention and for so underrating the strength of the chief's people. The chief was eventually brought to justice, however, by our own Consul.

One other little break occurred to me to vary the monotony of those long months. Attached to our ship was a small cutter which used to run down to small villages outside the Cameroon River. To one called Victoria I journeyed once with the mate and our little craft on a small trading venture. Victoria is situated at the foot of the splendid Cameroon mountain, which, like its neighbour at Fernando Po, always has snow at the peak; it is over 13,000 feet high and at that time only one or two men had ventured to the summit—one was, I believe, the late Sir Richard Burton. Since then several others have succeeded, amongst them the present Sir Harry Johnston, who did a lot of travelling when he was Vice-Consul, in those parts. Victoria is a snug little place. It was founded some years ago by a very old missionary, a Mr. Seagar, a man who did a great work in his time and whose name will never be forgotten in the Cameroon River. It lies in what is called Ambas Bay, which is sheltered somewhat from the south-west winds by two small islands. On one of these a British Consulate was erected a few years ago. The whole of this part as well as the Cameroon River is now a portion of the German Colony. We soon completed our business here and returned once more to our duties in the river. Between Victoria and

Cameroon is the village of Bimbia, said to be one of the most noted slave depots in the district. Hundreds of slaves used to be shipped from here in the days when the trade was allowed, and it is said that some time after the trade was prohibited one of these slave ships was just about to embark her human freight, when a British man-o'-war hove in sight. The captain, thinking his ship would be taken—and it was, I believe—and wanting to secure the golden dollars he had, took them to the shore and buried them. This is said to be thousands and thousands of pounds and is still unfound, so goes the tale. I tell it to you as it was told to me.

Our daily routine in the river was so similar that we will now consider the whole of the ship's cargo had been bought, and she is getting ready to make a start for home, which we were all very glad of; but our joy did not last long, for the mail arriving just at that time with letters from England, the captain received communication from our owners that they were sending out another ship, which he was instructed was for our chief mate to take charge of. That meant that the mate would have to remain to lay the cargo of her, while our old ship went home; but the poor man had been very ill for some time previous to this news, and was totally unfit to take charge; so under the circumstances there was only one thing to be done, and that was for the captain to remain and send the mate home. As soon as this was decided upon, two of us were asked to stay behind and help to work the newly-arrived vessel. I was one, the cook was the other (our skipper liked to be looked after in the eating department). Well, we soon settled down in our new quarters, and in a week or so said good-bye to our old ship and shipmates, who were jolly

glad to get out of the river, and did not envy us poor fellows who had to go through all the old duties over again without a bit of change. However, we entered upon our work with cheerful hearts. We had a good captain, and had no intention of leaving him as long as he remained out. Perhaps a word or two about the natives' trade tricks might interest you, then you will see a mate's life on an African trading ship was not altogether a "bed of roses"; and he had to be pretty sharp to catch them, otherwise our wily friends would be sure to have him. For instance, they had a happy knack of half-filling their casks with thick wood, secured in such a way to the inside of the heads that, instead of there being fifty gallons of oil in the cask which it would measure by the gauging rod, it would possibly not contain more than twenty-five; water, too, was very often introduced to make up a deficiency, and if you happened to tell our friend his oil contained water, you were told not water, it is rain. Another dodge was to mix a certain kind of herb with the oil, which caused it to ferment, so that half casks could very easily be made to look full ones. Dirt as well was freely used by the natives when they thought they could get it passed, so one had to keep one's eyes open.

APPENDIX II

PART II

PIONEERING IN WEST AFRICA; OR, "THE OPENING UP OF THE QUA IBOE RIVER"

IN the year 1880, I was asked by a Liverpool firm to undertake certain work in connection with one of the trading establishments on the Old Calabar River. The offer came at a very opportune time. Being anxious to improve my position, like most young fellows, I accepted, and was soon on the way to my new undertaking. My first business was to take an old ship, that had seen the best of her days, and had been lying there in the stream for many years as a trading hulk, now being considered unsafe to remain longer afloat. I had to place her on the beach in such a way that she could still be used as a trading establishment. This was not a small matter, as the beach upon which she had to be placed was not a good one for the purpose. However, I found that if I could get her to lie on a certain spot I had carefully marked out, there was every possibility of a success; but I fear I was the only one that thought so, as it was fully twelve months before my senior would let me undertake the venture; at last I got his consent, and in a very short time the vessel was landed safely, and, I am pleased to say, did duty for over ten years. It was while waiting for this

consent that the beginning of the events I am going to narrate took place.

Business was somewhat quiet in the Old Calabar, so our senior thought he would go for a bit of an excursion to a place called Qua Iboe, which was supposed to be a small tributary of the great river of Old Calabar, but which he found to his astonishment was some twenty-five miles westward of the mouth of the Old Calabar, and ninety miles from our main station at Calabar; however, he did not like to return without seeing the place, so he and his crew went, and after two or three days' journey, they suddenly found themselves in the midst of breakers, and it was only by luck they got washed into the mouth of the river Qua Iboe, half-dead with fright, so much so that our senior would not venture back in the boat, but preferred walking overland.

After being absent seven or eight days, he returned to headquarters with a very lively recollection of what he had gone through. Not being accustomed to the sea, the knocking about of the small boat very much upset him, then the long overland journey back took all the pleasure out of what he had intended to be a little holiday. Consequently, on his return he had but little to say about the river he had gone to see; and not being of a talkative disposition, had I not pressed him on the subject, I think, as far as our establishment was concerned, the Qua Iboe would have been a blank space on the map to-day, as many more fine places are in that great continent.

So while we were at dinner, an evening or so after his return, feeling very anxious to hear something about his excursion, I remarked that we had not heard him say much about the new river. "No," said he; "for the

simple reason is that I know but very little about it, except that I nearly got capsized in the breakers." "Well," I said, "is it a river of any size? Would it not be a good place to open up a new business?" "Oh, yes!" he said; "the river is a fair size, and it may or may not be a good place for business. We can't go there, we have not the means; we could not go without a vessel of some sort." "Well," said I, "would you go if you could? Or, in other words, will you give me all the support I need if I undertake to go?" "Yes, certainly," he said; "I shall be only too pleased to give you anything we have here."

That night I got to work and laid out all my plans. First I had to find a vessel. We had attached to our hulk a good large boat that would carry about ten tons. This boat I soon got rigged up with mast and sails. This done, I had a house constructed about sixty or seventy feet long by twenty wide, made ready to be put up on whatever spot I should pitch upon when I reached my new destination. This work, of course, took some little time. However, the eighth day after I had my senior's consent to go, I was sailing away from the Old Calabar, with my little craft and sixteen people besides myself.

It took some four or five days to get to the long-looked-for Qua Iboe. At last we were rewarded with a glimpse of the bar and its breakers, which we had to pass before we could get into the river. We, however, reached it safely, and with thankful hearts I can tell you, as our journey had been anything but a pleasant one—so many of us in such a small craft. I felt bound to take this number, as in addition to wanting these people for the building of the establishment, I wished to make as big a show as I could to the, at that time, unknown natives, who

had the reputation of being as bad a lot as were to be met with anywhere on the West Coast. Anyhow, I thought they would have to be pretty bad if I could not make something of them, so I sailed my boat flying up the river to the first village, which was supposed to be the senior one in the river, and was always called Big Town. It was just dusk when we arrived. We dropped anchor, and decided to rest for the night; but I found the villagers very excited, and not liking at all my advent among them, as they had just had news from the up-country informing them that if they allowed a white man to remain in their river, King Ja Ja, who was the very terror not only of this place, but of some fifty or sixty miles all round, had threatened to burn their towns down; he laying claim to all this country, allowed no one to trade there but himself.

The advice I had from these people was that I had better go back and leave them and their river to themselves. But I said, No, I am not going back. I have come to open a trading station and to remain with you, and that King Ja Ja, or any one else but our British Consul, would never drive me from that river alive. I saw, though, it was useless taking any notice of these frightened people, so I up anchor the next morning, and sailed up the river; near the next village I saw a suitable spot for our establishment. I at once anchored our boat, landed our people with house and everything we had brought, put up a bit of a shanty to sleep under for the time, and set to work to build our house; this, I may tell you, did not take long, for by the end of the week we had a fine-looking place up, such a one had never been seen in that part before. The house complete, my next work was to

get goods for the natives to buy from us. This meant a journey for me.

Ten days after our first arrival, our house and store were up and built, and I was away to the Old Calabar in our boat with some of my people to get goods to start our trade with ; the remainder stayed to put the finishing touches to our building and to clear the land near.

I was soon back at my post again and trade started. After this I had to make several journeys to keep our supply good, and all went well for about three months, with the exception of continuous rumours as to what King Ja Ja intended to do ; these I took no notice of, as I did not anticipate he would molest me or my people. However, my peaceful occupation was not to last for long ; for while I was away at Old Calabar replenishing our stock, a day or two previous to my return King Ja Ja, with about a thousand of his men, pounced down unexpectedly on these Qua Iboe people, burnt down seven villages, took one hundred prisoners, and drove the remainder of the population into the woods, cutting down every plantain tree, and destroying everything in the way of food stuff that was growing in the place. I arrived off the bar the day after this terrible business had taken place. When I left the river I left twelve of my people there. The head man had instructions that as soon as they saw me off the bar, when the tide was right for me to come in, to hoist a white flag.

The day I arrived, after waiting until I knew high water must have passed, I took my glasses, but there was not a soul visible. Not caring to risk our little vessel without the signal, I took a small boat we had with us and started over the bar into the river. What my surprise was you

will readily understand when, arriving at the store, I found only one man, half-dead with fright, and crying like a child; all I could get out of him was that Ja Ja had been there and killed every one in the place. The first thing I did was to at once return to the vessel, and bring her in with the remainder of my people. We landed all our stores, then I immediately hoisted our English ensign on the flag-staff. I prayed to the Almighty to defend us and the country from the tyranny of these dreadful men who had caused so much misery for these poor people. Their wretchedness I was soon brought face to face with.

The morning after my arrival, if ever a man's heart was softened mine was, and the tears came to my eyes when I saw crawling into the house from the woods a poor, half-starved cripple child, covered with sores, and in a dreadful state. We took it in at once and cared for it. Then I sent my people into the woods to see if they chanced to come across any one, and to tell them to come in under our flag, and I would see that no harm again befell them. In this we were very successful, for one after the other they arrived, more dead than alive, until some 700 of them were in and around our house. The next thing to be thought about was food for them. My last cargo fortunately was all rice and biscuits. This relieved me somewhat, and I felt we could at least manage for a short time.

To find food for such a great number gave me, as you may suppose, serious thought, for there was not a scrap left in the district; the land in this particular part being of a poor nature, the food grown at the best of times was very small, and this little had all been destroyed. But we had not to wait long before witnessing

one of the greatest blessings that could have happened. As soon as the men had somewhat recovered from their fright, they began to go out into the river to fish, when such quantities were caught that never in the remembrance of any person in that country had such an amount of fish been seen. Load after load was brought to the shore, in fact, some had to spoil before it could be cured.

What did all this wonderful catch bring about? While a short time before these people had been in the greatest poverty and distress, now they are rejoicing and thankful for this abundance of food and wealth. I say wealth because fish in this part of Africa is more precious than gold with us. With fish anything can be bought in the market, from the smallest article to the largest slave. So you see here was our relief brought about by the ever bountiful Providence, whose all-seeing eye is ever near those who are in want and need and ask His aid, whether it be the poorest slave in Africa or the orphan child in England.

From this time we began to gather strength day by day. New arrivals came in who had managed to get away to some place of safety until they felt they could return to their native place with security.

As soon as Ja Ja and his men had destroyed the villages they returned to their town of Opobo, with the hundred prisoners, the whole of whom they massacred in cold blood, and exhibited to their townspeople, and, I am sorry to say, to some Europeans, for days. While this fearful murdering was going on twenty-five miles away from us I, with a few of the most courageous Ibunos, or Qua Iboe people, made a tour of the principal villages in the Ibuno country to let the inhabitants know of the deadly onslaught that had been committed on the people at the mouth of the river. They

all swore to stand by us to a man, and to keep themselves free from Ja Ja's tyrannical rule. After making this round we returned to the mouth of the river and turned our attention to the defence of the new villages that were about to be built.

A little accident occurred to us while leaving the last village, called Ikoropata, that may be worth mentioning as a warning to others who might be placed in a similar situation. We had just started after having a long palaver with the chiefs, our men, about twenty, marching in single file, I near the leading man. All at once I noticed he was carrying his gun in a very alarming and unsuitable way. Had it gone off by accident, which is not an unusual occurrence, the man behind him was bound to receive the contents, with perhaps fatal results. Having stopped them and explained the danger of carrying guns in this position, we started off again, every man with his weapon to his shoulder. Strange to say, a few minutes after the very man's gun I had noticed at first blew off into the air with a tremendous report. Had this happened before, I fear we might have had to take one of our comrades back more dead than alive. The escape was a marvellous one, and not easily forgotten by any of us.

Now being back amongst our own people, we set about to get all the guns we could together, and all able bodied men I told off for gun practice and defence drill. This I carried on day after day, until we had quite a little band of well-trained men. All this time we were continually receiving rumours from the Opobo side as to what Ja Ja's next intentions were, and to keep up the excitement he sent about 200 men as near the mouth of the river as he dared. They settled themselves in a creek two or three

miles away from us, and here they used to amuse themselves by letting off now and again a regular fusilade of guns. This generally occurred in the middle of the night when every one but the watchmen had gone to sleep, and had such an effect on the frightened Ibunos that often two-thirds of them would rush off to the woods under the impression that the Opobos were again making a raid upon them. This went on for weeks, so much so that I was almost losing heart, and sometimes thought I should never get confidence in the people. At last, to my great surprise one evening in walked to my house the whole of the chiefs, who had just held a meeting in the village and passed a law that no person should again leave the town. They said they had come to tell me they felt ashamed of themselves for running away so many times and leaving me alone and unprotected in their country, and had decided to leave me no more, but that every man should stand and die if needs be for the defence of their towns. Whether Ja Ja's people heard of this resolution I don't know, but they soon dropped their gun firing at night, and eventually left their camping ground. Their next move was to get into the Ibunos' markets, and worry them there. This I was determined should not be done if I could help it. It was a long time before there was any real disturbance, although I could see that the Ibunos were daily getting more frightened that the Opobo people would monopolise their markets, and in that case they knew there would be very little chance for them.

At last news came down the river that the Opobos had that afternoon sent a canoe to a market or town called Okot for the purpose of starting a trade with the natives. Now Okot was at that time one of the best markets the

Ibunos had, and for them to be suddenly deprived of this trading station would be a terrible calamity to us all. I did not know what was to be done. The Ibunos would not go to the market to face the Opobos, neither would they go further up the river for fear of being molested by them. The only thing to do was to go myself and start a station at the same place, and which would enable me to keep an eye on their movements, so I at once made ready to start the same evening, and by five o'clock next morning I landed at Okot, and found the Opobo canoe there also, but like all Africans, time not being an object to them, they had not gone to the king or the owner of the land at the landing place. We did not wake the Opobos up on our arrival, but I immediately started for the village, and at daylight walked into the presence of the king of that part, who was so surprised to see a white man in his village that it took him some time to believe his eyes. Poor old chap! I fear he must have wished several times afterwards that he had never seen a white man, for he was taken prisoner by the Government in 1896 or 1897 for insisting, I believe, in carrying out some human sacrifice at one of the feast times, and died in prison. But to return to my mission. I soon made him understand that I had come to start a trading station at his beach, but before doing this I had to secure the land at the landing place for the purpose. This he readily consented to, telling me at the same time that although the land at that particular spot did not belong to him he would instruct the owner of it to sell me all I wanted. So after paying the usual compliments to the old king, I started back for the landing place with the owner, who had already sold his right to me, and was now only coming to show us the extent, which was the whole of the

land of any use on this spot. Just as we got back we found our Opobo friends preparing to go to the village to see the king and also get permission to build on this land, but their surprise on being told by him that he had no land on the spot to give them I will leave you to imagine. But the Opobos at that time took a lot of beating, and they decided to build a house without getting the permission of any one, and an iron roofed house too, which was considered by the natives then a great thing. After the house had stood for some time, our consul being in the river, we had the disputed land brought before him and thoroughly discussed. After hearing evidence on both sides for two days, it was decided that it belonged to us, and the Opobos were ordered to remove their house. But before this settlement occurred we had a lot to contend with from them. They did all in their power to debar us from keeping our establishments open there, and for two or three years we had continual trouble with them, occasionally firing at our people; luckily they seldom hit any one. Then they tried competing with us in trading. This I did not mind, as I considered it a fair means of testing who was who. Ja Ja, I knew, was a very rich man, and if we attempted to follow them in their extravagant prices we should soon be ruined. My policy was to let them go ahead, which they did, paying almost twice as much for their produce as we could possibly afford to pay. This lasted a great deal longer than I anticipated, and I feel sure Ja Ja must have lost a deal of money. After about twelve months of this reckless trading we were left pretty much to ourselves at Okot, and being fairly well settled down I began to look about for a good beach to start my next establishment. I had not to look far. On the left bank of the river, about two and a

half miles down from Okot, was the landing beach of Eket. Here there is a rising cliff about fifty feet high, and I had often remarked when passing this spot, "If I were going to build a house to live in here I should like to build it on this hill." The situation was so good, as it was right in an elbow of the river, and from the top of the hill you had a view of the river branching off both up and down at right angles. An opportunity occurring for me to start a house at Eket, I went and saw the people, who were very pleased for me to come among them. So a little house was built, and a young coloured assistant named William Sawyer placed in charge, who proved to be one of the best men I ever had in the country. He needed to be, too, for the Ekets were the most trying of any of the peoples we had to deal with. I never left my stations for any length of time. Once or twice a week I visited them, but no matter how short a time I was away there was always a grievance to be settled at Eket. Poor Sawyer had a terrible time; the people had an idea they could do as they liked with the factory keeper, and would often walk off with the goods without paying for them, which Mr. Sawyer naturally objected to, usually ending in a free fight, sometimes my people coming off second best. The trade at that time at Eket was not large, although it was a good one, and I did not want to give it up if it could be helped. But my patience came to an end when I arrived upon the scene one day and found Mr. Sawyer had been terribly handled the day before. There had been a big row, and I could see by his face he had had very much the worst of the fight. I felt I could not allow this any longer, so summoned a meeting of all the chiefs and people. We had a very large meeting, one of the largest I ever remember, and after

explaining to them my reason for calling them together, told them it was my intention to close the little house and go to some people higher up the river, who would be pleased for us to come among them, and would not ill-use my people as the Ekets were doing, and showing them how badly they had treated Mr. Sawyer, who had done nothing more than his duty in trying to protect the property that was under his care, and which they seemed to think they had a better right to than he. When they had heard my complaint and warning to close the house, the old and ever respected chief of all the Ekets rose to his feet. The people seeing this, there was silence in a moment (which every one knows who has happened to have been present at an African palaver is indeed a rarity), he being much loved and reverenced in his own town. As soon as he started I felt we were going to hear something worth hearing, and we did, for if ever there was a born statesman this was one. He said, "We have heard with sorrow of the way in which your people have been so ill-used by our people, and it is a shame to us a stranger should be so treated who is trying to do his best to bring business among us. Not only have you brought a business to us, where we can come and exchange our produce for our requirements, but you have opened our eyes to the light, as it were, and we have no intention that you should leave us. You have been sent to us by Abassy (which means God), and he will never let you leave us. Your trade will grow in such a way that you will see here on this beach far more trade than you will be able to cope with, so cast away from your mind the thought of leaving us. The disturbances that have been going on we will stop. It is not our wish that it has been so; it is the young boys of the village who know no better. We

will put a stop to it in such a way that you will find your people from this time will have but little to complain about." After such a speech you may be sure I gave up all thought of leaving the Eket people, and I need scarcely tell you that this same spot has become the centre of the whole of the trade of this river. The words spoken by the venerable and, I believe, good old chief came as true as the day. We did see often and often more trade than we could cope with, and the establishment grew in such a way that the natives themselves often used to wonder. I never had anything to do with a more prosperous undertaking in Africa, and to-day there are few establishments on the West Coast that can surpass it, either in its quiet, steady trade or healthy climate. I used to say one could live as long as they liked. On the hill there is a very fine house, with acres and acres of good land at the back of it, while at the foot of the hill are all the stores and the shop where the daily work and trade goes on year in year out.

Several very remarkable incidents happened here. One evening, just as we were going to dinner, a woman came and stood a little way from the house. I could see that she was crying bitterly and evidently in great distress. "What is the matter?" I said. "Affya (that is her brother) is dying, and I want you to come and see him before it is too late." Now Affya was one of the finest young fellows at Eket, and one whom I felt would be a sad loss to a people who wanted so much leading and governing, as it were. So I lost no time, but went off at once with the woman to see if I could do anything. On our arrival at the house things looked bad enough, and I feared the worst when I saw him laid out, as every one there thought, for dead—the finest young fellow at Eket. I fell on my knees by his side and

prayed as earnestly as man could to our Heavenly Father, and begged for this life to be spared to us. All at once he moved as though suddenly aroused from sleep, and in a moment I had him up and on the back of one of my boys, and away to Eket House as fast as possible, and laid him on the verandah to sleep and rest free from the close and stuffy hut he had been in before. After a little nourishment he slept all night. I kept watch near him, and next morning what was my surprise when he told me he was feeling quite strong and able to walk back to the village. This I allowed him to do after the sun had got well high, as I could plainly see the lad was out of all danger. Should these lines ever get into the hands of that lad, for lad he will always be to me, I feel very sure he will say, "Yes, this wonderful returning to life did indeed happen to me, Affya, son of Uso, at Eket, at the village of Usoniyong, in the month of July, 1892." This is one of the many incidents that occurred whilst I was in charge at Eket and the Qua Iboe River. Another evening, just after dinner, my steward came to me saying there was a rat under the house (our house stood on iron columns). "A rat," I said; "what do you mean?" "Well, a small woman."

"Go and bring her up; do not be afraid." He looked at me as much as to say you will be afraid when I do bring her up. Presently he appeared with a child in his arms, such a sight I never shall forget—almost starved to death, and covered with marks where she had been burnt with fire-sticks. This poor little thing, after wandering many days in the wood, at last found her way to our house. She was too ill to have anything done to her that evening, so I had a bed made for her in the sitting-room, close to my door, so that I could hear should she get frightened in

the night. The little thing woke up many times, but was soon off to sleep again when I had patted and spoken to it. The next day we had her seen to, the steward boy set about and made her some dresses, and after a warm bath and plenty of food, in a few days the little girl was the life of our house. The poor little thing had been left without father or mother, and had become dependent upon an uncle, or some other relative, who had ill-used her in such a terrible manner that he had left her for dead. How she ever found strength to get to our house was almost a mystery.

After being with us for twelve months, some other relatives laid claim to her, and as I was just leaving for England, I allowed them to take her, but not without making four or five of the principal chiefs responsible for her welfare. She will now be a grown woman, but will look back upon those happy months with pleasure, I feel sure.

Another incident may be of interest—quite a change of scene—showing you how you may be as kind and as good to a people as it is possible to be, yet you must always be ready to defend yourself at a moment's notice, which will be seen from the following circumstances. We had been troubled for some time past with night robberies, not very serious at first, but they became more frequent than I cared about. I gave the matter serious attention, but we could not trace the thieves, do what we would; the strange thing was, that as soon as a robbery had been committed, a native, a sort of half slave, was sure to be seen about the beach putting on what seemed to me a sort of bravado manner; but, of course, he never knew anything about the people who had been tampering with

the premises, and he always appeared to be surprised to think that any one should do such a thing, but at last matters came to a climax; our plantain trees had been cut down, and a whole lot of fine plantains stolen, as well as a lot of wire fencing. I was vexed to the extreme when this dastardly work was brought to my notice. But what was my surprise, no sooner had my lad reported the matter to me, when along walked the very man I have just described, looking as bold as brass. Said I to myself, "If you have not done this stealing you know something about it, and you will have to give an account of your movements before you leave these premises." So I sent orders to have him immediately put under arrest, which was done, and he was given to understand that until the thieves, whoever they were, had been brought to justice, he would have to remain under arrest.

This was an unexpected blow for my friend, but he proved one too many for my people. He managed to get the best side of his keeper, and slipped; next morning we had no prisoner, the bird had flown. I knew he would work no good for us in the villages, neither did he; he went from village to village, right through the Eket country, telling the people the most dreadful things, and the most abominable lies, of what had been done to him the short time he was our prisoner; so much so, that he got the people quite furious against me and my people. Just as an agitator will work up strife in England if he is not checked, so it was with this man; he got every village to declare war against me. This went on for three or four days, until he got them all to concentrate themselves. They were all brought one night to within a quarter of a mile of our establishment; here they had their war dances

all night, yet I did not think there was any likelihood of their attacking us. Still, for a couple of days things did not appear right, the people seemed strange in their manner; so I thought it not wise to be caught napping, and I made some preparations for an attack if we were to have one, and had the Gatling gun placed in position at the rear of the house. This I felt was quite enough to defend the house, if I could but get a fair chance to use it, although I was in hope I should not be called upon to do so.

We had not long to wait, for at 5.30 in the morning after a continuous beating of drums all night, I got up and walked out on the verandah, which was my usual custom, not thinking we were going to be attacked, but when I looked round, the wood and bush seemed to be alive with people, and some of them were already advancing towards the house, while one chief, more daring than the others, came on near enough for me to speak to him. Seeing this unexpected development of affairs, and the suspicious look of my friend near at hand, I called to my boy, who was near, to bring my revolver, and no sooner had the chief got within twenty paces or so of the house, when I called upon him to stop and tell me what was their mission so early in the morning. He said they had come to talk over the matter of the man I had imprisoned. But I said this is not the time of day we usually talk over matters we may have in dispute—the afternoon being always the recognised time. "Yes," said my friend, "but we want to settle matters now." "All right," I said, and with that I held my revolver at his head, and ordered him to stand, and not move an inch, or I would shoot him dead on the spot. The people at the

back, seeing what was taking place, began to move towards the house. I said to my boy, "run to the beach and tell Mr. Sawyer to come up." This was my coloured assistant, whom I knew I could trust. The lad was away, and Mr. Sawyer at my side before the people had got too near. "What am I to do, sir?" "Take this revolver and hold it to that man's head, whilst I jump to the Gatling; if he moves, shoot him down." There was not half a move in him, and in a moment I was at the Gatling. By this time there was a general move forward from all parts of the bush, but no sooner did this black mass see I was at the gun, and determined to fight or die, quicker than I can write these words, I saw the whole body fall back in dismay. There was my opportunity. I jumped from the Gatling, went straight to the people, and demanded of them what they wanted to do. Their answer was—"We don't know; we are a lot of fools, and we have lost our heads; send us back, we have no business to come to fight against you, and we don't want to."

By seven o'clock that morning the trade was going on in our establishment as though nothing had happened. This little incident I have always described as a bloodless battle, won in a few moments; yes, in almost less time than it has taken me to write its description. This matter we finally settled, after holding a large meeting with all the chiefs and people. The laws of these people are very definite; you must have absolute proof of a person's guilt, before you can even accuse him. I had to sit as judge over my own case, which was rather an unfair position for one to be placed in. But as the laws are definite it was simple enough to decide. The question was—"Had I any proof that this man was one of the thieves, or in any

way connected with the affair?" I had not; my evidence was purely suppositional. This ended the matter. I was in the wrong, therefore I had no alternative but to put a fine upon myself, which I did, and was very pleased to end what had nearly cost me my life, and probably also a number of my people. After this affairs went on merrily at Eket.

There was a place called Okon some few miles up the river from Eket, and here I proposed to start another establishment, so had made all preparations at Ibuno for that purpose, and left the latter place with my boat, people, provisions and materials. We arrived at Okot overnight, intending to sleep there, as it was the nearest beach to Okon. All went well until the next morning, when we were preparing to start. My factory keeper at Okot came to me in the most serious manner possible, wanting to know if I really meant going to Okon. I said "Certainly, we have come up for the purpose." "Well," he said, "I think you had better not go; there are very nasty rumours about here that it is intended to do you some harm if you should attempt to open up at Okon; in other words, men have been appointed to take your life." "All right," I said; "we must take our chance; we shall not turn back until we have tried." So away we went, I in a small boat with a few boys, the others in another boat with the etceteras. We arrived at Okon and landed our goods, but we found a number of Ja Ja's people had arrived before us. I took no notice of them any more than passing the time of day. However, I must confess I did not like their demeanour Nothing was said and our provisions were safely housed in a native shanty. Here I intended to remain while building our own house. The timber, iron and other goods were

placed on the spot we intended to occupy. This done, I started off with a couple of boys to acquaint the king and the people of the village of our arrival, and to get the king or some of his chiefs to come down and allot me the land I required. We had been in the village some little time, and matters were well-nigh settled, when all at once there was a general stampede from the meeting house, and just at that moment I heard a regular fusilade of guns, and in came running one of my people from the beach, nearly frightened to death. "Massa, massa, come quick to the beach; Ja Ja's men have burnt down the house and want to shoot us all, and all our goods are in their hands. By this time a lot of Ja Ja's men were in the village, and I was left absolutely alone with the exception of my own boys and the one that had run up from the beach. Every native had rushed to his compound as soon as the firing had commenced. I turned to my boys, told them not to fire, but to keep cool, do as I told them, and be ready to protect themselves if any one attacked them, not else. So down we slowly walked to the beach. Here was a sight for me! All my goods thrown to the four winds, my house burnt to the ground, and about a hundred or more of Ja Ja's or Opobo men arranged up in line, every man with his rifle and cutlass, ready to fight, which they evidently anticipated I should do as soon as I appeared on the scene; but this I had no intention of doing. To attempt to show fight against such odds would have been simply suicidal, so I made up my mind to show the best front possible under the circumstances, called my boys, placed them in equal numbers on either side of me, with our backs to the bush and facing our would-be enemies. I then inquired what they wished to do. Drawing my revolver, which was a six

chambered one, I held it up. "If you want my life you may have it, but, FIRST, *let me tell you, inside this small gun I hold six men's lives; these six men I* WILL *have*, then you may have me." Not a word was uttered. Then I said, "If you do not want that, I and my people will leave you here in possession of these goods and the house that you have already partly destroyed." With this I ordered my boys to the boats, to which we went quietly and in order, leaving our Opobo friends dumbfounded and baulked of the main object of their mission.

When we had got well clear of the beach I was thankful indeed, for never was a man nearer death than I was at that time, I think. We went down to Ibuno as fast as our boats could go, our boys singing as Kroo boys can sing when they feel themselves free from danger. I only stayed a few hours at Ibuno. As soon as the tide served I made right away to Old Calabar to lay the whole affair before H.M. Consul. After this I felt I had done my duty in the matter of the Opobo business. The affair was, of course, settled against the Opobos, and they had to leave the Okon beach to us absolutely.

I must not deal with the rough side only of pioneer life in West Africa, so I think I will just touch upon one of the many kindnesses shown to me by the Ibunos during these troublous times. The Qua Iboe bar, like many others along the coast, more so in this particular part, is very treacherous, being composed of quicksand. It is always on the move, so the channel changes from place to place. Sometimes you go in and out at one side, sometimes at the other, and sometimes straight through the centre. These moving sands require a great deal of careful watching and constant surveying, which I used to invariably see to and

do myself about once a fortnight. While out on this work one day, with four boys and Mr. Williams, who at that time had a small establishment at Ibuno, and was as anxious as I was to know the true position of the channel, we were both working small sailing craft—we had not risen to a steamer then—(now there is, and has been for a considerable time, one working the same river), and started off, the weather being fairly fine, and to all appearances the sea very quiet. All went well with us going out. I got soundings right through the channel, and after passing safely we turned our boat about to come back into the river again. Along we came until we got right into the centre of the bar, then suddenly a sea took us, and before any one could speak the boat was over. We were under water and the boat on top of us. Being a good swimmer, I was not afraid, but immediately dived down and came up alongside the boat. My boys were round me like a swarm of fish, not knowing whether I could swim or not. I soon put their minds at rest and told them not to trouble about me, but to get everything together belonging to the boat and get her righted. This done, "Now," I said, "if you will all keep your heads and do as you are told, we shall get the boat and ourselves through all right." So we divided, three on one side, three on the other, and swam with the boat until we reached the beach, which was about a mile and a halfdistant,and I can tell you took us some considerable time. Before we landed we had been something like three hours in the water, which is no small matter anywhere, much less in West Africa, where one is not always in the best of condition. Mr. Williams got very frightened and, I think, was in doubt once or twice as to whether we should reach the shore; but we did, and were truly thankful, and although

we did not openly show it, we gave none the less hearty thanks from our inmost hearts. After landing we righted our boat and paddled off up river to our factory. Here we arrived before any of the natives knew what had happened. Our boys soon put the news about, as they felt they had had a marvellous escape. Mr. Williams and I drank as much brandy as we could manage, then I jumped into bed and remained until the next morning. I believe he did the same too. At daylight I awoke and felt, to my surprise, as well as I ever felt in my life. Being so long in the water, I fully anticipated a severe attack of fever next day, but it wasn't so, and I was about my business as though nothing had happened. I don't think I should have thought any more about it had not the Ibunos so forcibly reminded me of the danger we really had passed through. After having so many narrow escapes this one appeared to pass as a matter of ordinary occurrence. Not so to them; the afternoon of the day after the accident, while I was out about the work, I saw an unusual number of natives going to the house, each little contingent carrying baskets of yams and fish. I had not long to wait before one of my boys came to tell me the Ibuno people wished to speak with me at the house. I went to them at once. Here was my dining room full of natives, and in the centre a pile of yams two or three feet high, and fish, the very finest that had been caught that day, as well as some very beautiful dried fish, enough to last me and my people, I should think, a month or more. This sight took me rather by surprise, not quite knowing what was about to take place. I took the chair which was placed for me and waited. All being quiet, one of the chiefs rose up and said, "We know you are somewhat surprised to see all us villagers here to-day, and also the

food we have brought with us which is now in front of you, but we have come to tell you how sorry we all were, men, women and children throughout our villages, when we heard you had been thrown into the sea, and all had such a narrow escape of losing your lives. We are all the more sorry to think that not one of our people were able to render you the slightest assistance. Had we seen you or known what was taking place every canoe would have come to your aid, but we did not, and while we were sitting comfortably in our houses you were struggling in the water. To us this has been a grief, and to show you how thankful we are to think you have been preserved to us through this danger and many others, we have brought for your acceptance the best we can offer you. We are but poor, as you know, but these gifts come from our hearts as a present to you and a thank-offering to our Father in Heaven who has been pleased to restore you to us unhurt. We are, we must tell you, thankful in more ways than one for your deliverance, because had you been lost our great enemy Ja Ja would at once have said his Ju Ju had worked that it should be so." With this he sat down.

For me to attempt to express what I felt at that moment would be impossible; I must say I felt a very unpleasant feeling in my throat, and I don't know but that some of the water I had had too much of the day before was having a good try to assert itself. If it had, it was not to be wondered at; for any one would have to have been hard indeed if such kindness did not touch them; even the strongest of us are bound sometimes to give way for a moment. I did not attempt to hide from them the fulness of my heart, and the gratitude I felt for such kindness, where I least expected it. I told them I

had not thought much of the accident, but I was thankful to think my life and my people had been spared, and I only hoped I should live to show them how their great kindness would ever be remembered by me, and would not be forgotten as long as life lasted. After general thanks our meeting broke up and ended, but has never been forgotten.

After we had got fairly well established and our trade began to develop itself, our firm at Liverpool chartered a small brig, with a general cargo of goods for us, which in due time I was notified of. Now this was a great event, not only for us, but for the river, as this would be the first sailing ship that had ever entered the Qua Iboe to bring in and take out a cargo direct. Everything that had been done before this was by small craft, and transhipped at one of the main rivers; so I was very anxious that the arrival of this ship should be made as complete a success as possible. I knew it would be next to impossible to bring her in right over the bar, as deeply laden as she would be from England, as our depth of water was not more than 8 ft. 6 in. to 9 ft. at spring tides, and this vessel would draw from 10 to 11 ft. at the very least.

In due time the little ship was sighted off the bar. As soon as the tide made, I put off to her to receive her letters, and to give the captain instructions as to what I wished him to do. On arriving alongside, the first thing I found was that her draft of water was 11 ft., so I told the captain he could not possibly go into the river with that draft, so we decided to lighten her all we could; I left again for the shore to make all the necessary arrangements to this end. The next morning our boats were started off out; the day being fine they all got alongside

without much trouble, and brought away as much as they could carry, which was not more than about twenty tons; this from 200 did not make much impression on the ship's draught. Next day all the boats were again despatched; this time the weather was anything but favourable, and, to my dismay, while all the boats crossed the bar in safety, not one could get to the ship; the wind and current being so strong down from the westward against them, they all fell away to leeward. When night came on they anchored, as they could neither get to the ship nor back to the river; here they were without food or fire. All remained until the next day, when the weather, if anything, was worse; so when evening came and they all found it was useless trying to get back into the river or to the ship, and being without food, they all ran before the wind for the Old Calabar River, which was some twenty-five miles to the mouth, then about thirty-five miles more of river, until they got to our establishment there; here they eventually arrived nearly starved; while I, with only one boy, was left at the Ibuno factory in a dreadful state of mind, as you may imagine, wondering what had happened to our people, and also what was to be done with the ship and cargo. The spring tides were upon us, and the vessel either had to come in at once, or remain out another fortnight, and be under demurrage, which meant a very serious matter for us. Being our first ship, it was most unfortunate. The only thing to do was to bring her in as she stood. This had to be done at all costs; so I at once got Mr. Williams, who, by-the-bye, was generally to the fore in time of need, to lend me his boat, with three of his boys; these, with my one, made up some sort of a crew. Away we went, and got safely out. On the way I had a

good survey of the bar, so as to get every inch of the water it was possible. This carefully done, we arrived alongside the ship, and no one was more surprised than the captain, when I told him I had come out to take his ship into the river, if he was ready. "Yes," he said; "if you will undertake to do it." "I will," I said. "You work your ship as I tell you, and we shall get in all right, I feel confident."

The order was given to loose all sails and heave anchor, which was done in a very short time. As the tide was near to being high, there was no time to be lost. We were soon under way, and our little craft, with all sails set, bounding for the bar. I had my channel to a nicety; over we went, to my astonishment, without a touch. The relief I felt when this was passed, I am unable to describe. In a short time the first ship that had ever entered Qua Iboe River from England direct was anchored off our factory. The natives crowded down to see this, to them, wonderful sight, and when I landed I was immediately carried on the shoulders of some of the crowd up to my house. The delight in the river that evening was great indeed; so much so, that I shall not easily forget that event.

Still, my troubles were not quite at an end, for while we had the ship in, we had no one to discharge her cargo; but "necessity being the mother of invention," I called the chiefs of the village together, and told them of my position. One boy was all I had, and the cargo must come out of the ship. "All right," they said, "show our people what has to be done; we will discharge the ship." Next morning our beach was alive with people, and by the evening of the next day she was completely discharged

and ready for homeward cargo. We could now afford to take more time. The next thing was to commence loading; this we had got well on with, when our people returned. After this we were not long in getting our ship ready for going out over the bar again, which was done as successfully as she was brought in. After getting her clear we ran her to Old Calabar to complete her loading for England. This ended our first ship, others followed after, one of which got left on the bar a wreck, and another turned back and was condemned in the river. We soon gave up the idea of working sailing ships. A small steamer was bought, and after this things went fairly well.

APPENDIX III

TRADE GOODS USED IN THE EARLY TRADE WITH AFRICA AS GIVEN BY BARBOT AND OTHER WRITERS OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. BY M. H. KINGSLEY

"Those used in trade by the Senga Company of Senegal at St. Lewis and Goree and their dependent factories of Rufisco, Camina, Juala, Gamboa (Gambia), *circa* 1677.

"For the convenience of trade between the French at the Senega and the natives, all European goods are reduced to a certain standard, viz., hides, bars, and slaves, for the better understanding whereof I give some instances. One bar of iron is reckoned as worth 8 hides, 1 cutlace the same, 1 cluster of bugles weighing 4¼ lbs. as 3 hides, 1 bunch of false pearls 20 hides, 1 bunch of Gallet 4 hides, 1 hogshead of brandy from 150 to 160 hides. Bugles are very small glass beads, and mostly made at Venice, and sold in strings and clusters. At Goree the same goods bear not quite so good a rate, as, for example, a hogshead of brandy brings but 140 hides, 1 lb. of gunpowder 2 hides, 1 piece of eight 5 hides, 1 oz. of coral 7 or 8 hides, 1 oz. of crystal 1 hide, an ounce of yellow amber 2 hides.

"A slave costs from 12 to 14 bars of iron, and sometimes 16, at Porto d'Ali 18 to 20, and much more at Gamboa,

according to the number of ships, French, English, Portuguese, and Dutch, which happen to be there at the same time. The bar of iron is rated at 6 hides.

"Besides these, which are the most staple commodities, the French import common red, blue, and scarlet cloth, silver and brass rings or bracelets, chains, little bells, false crystal, ordinary and coarse hats, *Dutch* pointed knives, pewter dishes, silk sashes with false gold and silver fringes, blue serges, *French* paper, steels to strike fire, *English* sayes, *Roan* linen, salamporis, platillies, blue callicoes, taffeties, chintzs, cawris or shells, by the French called *bouges*, coarse north, red cords called *Bure*, lines, shoes, fustian, red worsted caps, worsted fringe of all colours, worsted of all kinds in skeins, basons of several sizes, brass kettles, yellow amber, maccatons, that is, beads of two sorts, pieces of eight of the old stamp, some pieces of 28 sols value, either plain or gilt, Dutch cutlaces, straight and bow'd, and clouts, galet, martosdes, two other sorts of beads of which the blacks make necklaces for women, white sugar, musket balls, iron nails, shot, white and red frize, looking-glasses in plain and gilt frames, cloves, cinnamon, scissors, needles, coarse thread of sundry colours, but chiefly red, yellow, and white, copper bars of a pound weight, ferrit, men's shirts, coarse and fine, some of them with bone lace about the neck, breast, and sleeves, *Haerlem* cloths, *Coasveld* linen, *Dutch* mugs, white and blue, *Leyden* rugs or blankets, *Spanish* leather shoes, brass trumpets, round padlocks, glass bottles with a tin rim at the mouth, empty trunks or chests, and a sort of bugle called Pezant, but above all, as was said above, great quantities of brandy, and iron in bars; particularly at Goree the company imports 10,000 or more every year of those which are made in their

province of *Brittany*, all short and thin, which is called in London narrow flat iron, or half flat iron in Sweden, but each bar shortened or cut off at one end to about 16 to 18 inches, so that about 80 of these bars weigh a ton English. It is to be observed that such voyage-iron, as it is called in London, is the only sort and size used throughout all Nigritia, Guinea, and West Ethiopia in the way of trade. Lastly, a good quantity of Cognac brandy, both in hogsheads and rundlets, single and double, the double being 8, the single 4 gallons.

"The principal goods the French have in return for these commodities from the *Moors* and *Blacks* are slaves, gold dust, elephants' teeth, beeswax, dry and green hides, gum-arabic, ostrich feathers, and several other odd things, as ambergris, cods of musk, tygers' and goats' skins, provisions, bullocks, sheep, and teeth of sea-horses (hippopotamus)."

The main trade of the Senga or Senegal Company seems to have been gum and slaves in these regions. Gold dust they got but little of in Senegal, the Portuguese seeming to have been the best people to work that trade. The ivory was, according to Barbot, here mainly that picked up in woods, and scurfy and hollow, or, as we should call it, kraw kraw ivory, the better ivory coming from the Qua Qua Ivory Coast. Hides, however, were in the seventeenth century, as they are now, a regular line in the trade of Senegambia, and the best hides came from the Senegal River, the inferior from Rufisco and Porto d'Ali. Barbot says: "They soak or dye these hides as soon as they are flayed from the beast, and presently expose them to the air to dry; which, in my opinion, is the reason why, wanting the true first seasoning, they are apt to corrupt and breed worms if not looked after and often beaten with

a stick or wand, and then laid up in very dry store houses." I have no doubt Barbot is right, and that there is not enough looking after done to them now a days, so that the worms have their own way too much,

The African hides were held in old days inferior to those shipped from South America, both in thickness and size, and were used in France chiefly to cover boxes with; but in later times, I am informed, they were sought after and split carefully into two slices, serving to make kid for French boots.

"The French reckoned the trade of the Senga Company to yield 700 or 800 per cent. advance upon invoice of their goods, and yet their Senga Company, instead of thriving, has often brought a noble to ninepence. Nay, it has broken twice in less than thirty years, which must be occasioned by the vast expense they are at in Europe, Africa, and America, besides ill-management of their business; but this is no more than the common fate of Dutch and English African Companies, as well as that to make rather loss than profit, because their charges are greater than the trade can bear, in maintaining so many ports and other forts and factories in Africa, which devour all the profits." I quote this of Barbot as an interesting thing, considering the present state of West Coast Colonial finance.

GAMBIA TRADE, 1678.

"The factors of the English Company at James Fort, and those of the French at Albreda and other places, drive a very great trade in that country all along the river in brigantines, sloops, and canoes, purchasing—

Elephants' teeth, beeswax, slaves, pagnos (country-made

clothes), hides, gold and silver, and goods also found in the Sengal trade.

In exchange they give the *Blacks*—

Bars of iron, drapery of several sorts, woollen stuffs and cloth, linen of several sorts, coral and pearl, brandy or rum in anchors, firelocks, powder, ball and shot, Sleysiger linen, painted callicoes of gay colours, shirts, gilded swords, ordinary looking-glasses, salt, hats, *Roan* caps, all sorts and sizes of bugles, yellow amber, rock crystal, brass pans and kettles, paper, brass and pewter rings, some of them gilt, box and other combs, *Dutch* earthen cans, false ear-rings, satalaes, and sabres or cutlaces, small iron and copper kettles, *Dutch* knives called *Bosmans*, hooks, brass trumpets, bills, needles, thread and worsted of several colours." This selection practically covered the trade up to Sierra Leone.

SIERRA LEONE, 1678.

"Exports.—Elephants' teeth, slaves, santalum wood, a little gold, much beeswax with some pearls, crystal, long peppers, ambergris, &c. The ivory here was considered the best on the West Coast, being, says Barbot, very white and large, have had some weighing 80 to 100 lbs., at a very modest rate 80 lbs. of ivory for the value of five livres *French* money, in coarse knives and other such toys. The gold purchased in Sierra Leone, the same authority states, comes from Mandinga and other remote countries towards the Niger or from South Guinea by the River Mitomba. The trade selection was: French brandy or rum, iron bars, white callicoes, Sleysiger linen, brass kettles, earthen cans, all sorts of glass buttons, brass rings or

bracelets, bugles and glass beads of sundry colours, brass medals, earrings, *Dutch* knives, *Bosmans*, first and second size, hedging bills and axes, coarse laces, crystal beads, painted callicoes (red) called chintz, oil of olive, small duffels, ordinary guns, muskets and fuzils, gunpowder, musket balls and shot, old sheets, paper, red caps, men's shirts, all sorts of counterfeit pearls, red cotton, narrow bands of silk stuffs or worsted, about half a yard broad for women, used about their waists.

The proper goods to purchase, the cam wood and elephants' teeth in Sherboro' River, are chiefly these :—

Brass basons and kettles, pewter basons, and tankards, iron bars, bugles, painted callicoes, *Guinea* stuffs or cloths, *Holland* linen or cloth, muskets, powder, and ball. A ship may in two months time out and home purchase here fifty-six tons of cam wood and four tons of elephants' teeth or more."

The trade selection for the Pepper Coast was practically the same as for Sierra Leone, only less extensive and cheaper in make, and had a special line in white and blue large beads. The main export was Manequette pepper and rice, the latter of which was to be had in great quantity but poor quality at about a halfpenny a pound ; and there was also ivory to be had, but not to so profitable an extent as on the next coast, the Ivory. The same selection of goods was used for the Ivory Coast trade as those above-named, with the addition of Contaccarbe or Contabrode, namely, iron rings, about the thickness of a finger which the blacks wear about their legs with brass bells, as they do the brass rings or bracelets about their arms in the same manner. The natives here also sold country-made cloths, which were bought by the factors to use in trade

in other districts, mainly the Gold Coast; the Ivory Coast cloths come from inland districts, those sold at Cape La Hou are of six stripes, three French ells and a half long, and very fine; those from Corby La Hou of five stripes, about three ells long, and coarser. They also made "clouts" of a sort of hemp, or plant like it, which they dye handsomely, and weave very artificially.

THE GOLD COAST.

This coast has, from its discovery in the 15th century to our own day, been the chief trade region in the Bight of Benin; and Barbot states that the amount of gold sent from it to Europe in his day was £240,000 value per annum.

The trade selection for the Gold Coast trade in the 17th and 18th centuries is therefore very interesting, as it gives us an insight into the manufactures exported by European traders at that time, and of a good many different kinds; for English, French, Portuguese, Dutch, Danes and Brandenburghers were all engaged in the Gold Coast trade, and each took out for barter those things he could get cheapest in his own country.

"The *French* commonly," says Barbot, "carry more brandy, wine, iron, paper, firelocks, &c., than the *English* or *Dutch* can do, those commodities being cheaper in *France*, as, on the other hand, they (the *English* and *Dutch*) supply the Guinea trade with greater quantities of linen, cloth, bugles, copper basons and kettles, wrought pewter, gunpowder, sayes, perpetuanas, chintzs, cawris, old sheets, &c., because they can get these wares from *England* or *Holland*.

"The *French* commonly compose their cargo for the Gold

Coast trade to purchase slaves and gold dust; of brandy, white and red wine, ros solis, firelocks, muskets, flints, iron in bars, white and red contecarbe, red frize, looking glasses, fine coral, sarsaparilla, bugles of sundry sorts and colours and glass beads, powder, sheets, tobacco, taffeties, and many other sorts of silks wrought as brocardels, velvets, shirts, black hats, linen, paper, laces of many sorts, shot, lead, musket balls, callicoes, serges, stuffs, &c., besides the other goods for a true assortment, which they have commonly from *Holland*.

"The *Dutch* have *Coesveld* linen, Slezsiger lywat, old sheets, *Leyden* serges, dyed indigo-blue, perpetuanas, green, blue and purple, *Konings-Kleederen*, annabas, large and narrow, made at *Haerlem*; *Cyprus* and *Turkey* stuffs, *Turkey* carpets, red, blue and yellow cloths, green, red and white *Leyden* rugs, silk stuffs blue and white, brass kettles of all sizes, copper basons, *Scotch* pans, barbers' basons, some wrought, others hammered, copper pots, brass locks, brass trumpets, pewter, brass and iron rings, hair trunks, pewter dishes and plates (of a narrow brim), deep porringers, all sorts and sizes of fishing hooks and lines, lead in sheets and in pipes, 3 sorts of *Dutch* knives, *Venice* bugles and glass beads of sundry colours and sizes, sheep skins, iron bars, brass pins long and short, brass bells, iron hammers, powder, muskets, cutlaces, cawris, chintz, lead balls and shot, brass cups with handles, cloths of *Cabo Verdo*, *Qua Qua*, *Ardra* and *Rio Forcada*, blue coral, *alias* akory from Benin, strong waters and abundance of other wares, being near 160 sorts, as a *Dutchman* told me."

I am sorry Barbot broke down just when he seemed going strong with this list, and I was out of breath checking the indent, and said "other wares," but I cannot help

it, and beg to say that this is the true assortment for the Gold Coast trade in 1678. The English selection "besides many of the same goods above mentioned have tapseils, broad and narrow, nicanees fine and coarse, many sorts of chintz or *Indian* callicoes printed, tallow, red painting colours, *Canary* wine, sayes, perpetuanas inferior to the *Dutch* and sacked up in painted tillets with the *English* arms, many sorts of white callicoes, blue and white linen, *China* satins, *Barbadoes* rum, other strong waters and spirits, beads of all sorts, buckshaws, *Welsh* plain, boysades, romberges, clouts, gingarus, taffeties, amber, brandy, flower, *Hamburgh* brawls, and white, blue and red chequered linen, narrow *Guinea* stuffs chequered, ditto broad, old hats, purple beads. The *Danes*, *Brandenburghers* and *Portuguese* provide their cargoes in *Holland* commonly consisting of very near the same sort of wares as I have observed the *Dutch* make up theirs, the two former having hardly anything of their own proper to the trade of the Gold Coast besides copper and silver, either wrought or in bullion or in pieces of eight, which are a commodity also there.

"The *Portuguese* have most of their cargoes from *Holland* under the name of *Jews* residing there, and they add some things of the product of *Brazil*, as tobacco, rum, tame cattle, *St. Tome* cloth, others from *Rio Forcado* and other circumjacent places in the Gulf of Guinea."

USE MADE OF EUROPEAN GOODS BY THE NATIVES OF THE GOLD COAST. BARBOT.

"The broad linen serves to adorn themselves and their dead men's sepulchers within, they also make clouts thereof. The narrow cloth to press palm oil; in old sheets they wrap

themselves at night from head to foot. The copper basons to wash and shave. The *Scotch* pans serve in lieu of butchers' tubs when they kill hogs or sheep, from the iron bars the smiths forge out all their weapons, country and household tools and utensils; of frize and perpetuanas, they make girts 4 fingers broad to wear about their waists and hang their sword, dagger, knife and purse of money or gold, which purse they commonly thrust between the girdle and their body. They break *Venice* coral into 4 or 5 parts, which afterwards they mould into any form on whetstones and make strings or necklaces which yield a considerable profit; of 4 or 5 ells of *English* or *Leyden* serges, they make a kind of cloak to wrap about their shoulders and stomachs. Of chintz, perpetuanas, printed callicoes, tapsiels and nicanees, are made clouts to wear round their middles. The wrought pewter, as dishes, basons, porringers, &c., serve to eat their victuals out of, muskets, firelocks and cutlaces they use in war; brandy is more commonly spent at their feasts, knives to the same purposes as we use them. With tallow they anoint their bodies from head to toe and even use it to shave their beards instead of soap. Fishing hooks for the same purpose as with us. *Venice* bugles, glass beads and contacarbe, serve all ages and sexes to adorn their heads, necks, arms and legs very extravagantly, being made into strings; and sarsaparilla."—Well, I think I have followed Barbot enough for the present on this point, and turn to his description of the dues the natives have to pay to native authorities on goods bought of Europeans, which amounted to 3 per cent. paid to the proper officers; the kings of the land have at each port town, and even fishes, if it exceeds a certain quantity pays 1 in 5; these duties are paid either in coin or value. Up the inland they pay no duty on river fish,

but are liable to pay a capitation fee of one shilling per head for the liberty of passing down to the sea-shore either to traffic or attend the markets with their provisions or other sorts of the product of the land, and pay nothing at their return home, goods or no goods, unless they by chance leave their arms in the village, then the person so doing is to pay one shilling.

The collectors account quarterly with their kings, and deliver up what each has received in gold at his respective post, but the fifth part of the fish they collect is sent to the king as they have it, and serves to feed his family.

No fisherman is allowed to dispose of the first fish he has caught till the duty is paid, but are free to do it aboard ships, which perhaps may be one reason why so many of them daily sell such quantities of their fish to the seafaring men.

Barbot, remarking on this Gold Coast trade, says: "The Blacks of the Gold Coast, having traded with Europeans ever since the 14th century, are very well skilled in the nature and proper qualities of all European wares and merchandize vended there; but in a more particular manner since they have so often been imposed on by the Europeans, who in former ages made no scruple to cheat them in the quality, weight and measures of their goods which at first they received upon content, because they say it would never enter into their thoughts that white men, as they call the Europeans, were so base as to abuse their credulity and good opinion of us. But now they are perpetually on, their guard in that particular, examine and search very narrowly all our merchandize, piece by piece, to see each the quality and measure contracted for by samples; for

instance, if the cloth is well made and strong, whether dyed at *Haerlem* or *Leyden*—if the knives be not rusty—if the basons, kettles, and other utensils of brass and pewter are not cracked or otherwise faulty, or strong enough at the bottom. They measure iron bars with the sole of the foot —they tell over the strings of contacarbel, taste and prove brandy, rum or other liquors, and will presently discover whether it is not adulterated with fresh or salt water or any other mixture, and in point of French brandy will prefer the brown colour in it. In short they examine everything with as much prudence and ability as any European can do."

"The goods sold by *English* and *Dutch*, *Danes*, *Brandenburghers*, &c., ashore, out of these settlements are generally about 25 per cent. dearer to the Blacks than they get aboard ships in the Roads; the supercargoes of the ships commonly falling low to get the more customers and make a quicker voyage, for which reason the forts have very little trade with the Blacks during the summer season, which fills the coast with goods by the great concourse of ships at that time from several ports of Europe; and as the winter season approaches most of them withdraw from the coast, and so leave elbow room for the fort factors to trade in their turn during that bad season.

"In the year 1682 the gold trade yielded hardly 45 per cent. to our French ships, clear of any charges; but that might be imputed to the great number of trading ships of several European nations which happened to be at that time on the coast, whereof I counted 42 in less than a month's time: had the number been half as great that trade would have appeared 60 per cent. or more, and if a cargo were properly composed it might well clear 70 per

cent. in a small ship sailing with little charge, and the voyage directly home from this coast not to exceed 7 or 8 months out and home, if well managed."

These observations of Barbot's are alike interesting and instructive, and in principle applicable to the trade to-day. Do not imagine that Barbot was an early member of the Aborigines' Protection Society when he holds forth on the way in which Europeans "in former ages" basely dealt with the angelic confidence of the Blacks. One of his great charms is the different opinions on general principles, &c., he can hold without noticing it himself: of course this necessitates your reading Barbot right through, and that means 668 pages folio in double column, or something like 2,772 pages of a modern book; but that's no matter, for he is uniformly charming and reeks with information.

Well, there are other places in Barbot where he speaks, evidently with convictions, of "this rascal fellow Black," &c. and gives long accounts of the way in which the black man cheats with false weights and measures, and adulterates; and if you absorb the whole of his information and test it against your own knowledge, and combine it with that of others, I think you will come to the conclusion that it is not necessary for the philanthropist to fidget about the way the European does his side to the trade; the moralist may drop a large and heavy tear on both white and black, but that is all that is required from him. Unfortunately this is not all that is done nowadays: the black has got hold of Governmental opinion, and just when he is more than keeping his end up in commercial transactions, he has got the Government to handicap his white fellow-trader with a mass of heavy dues and irritating restrictions, which will end most

certainly in stifling trade. My firm conviction is that black and white traders should be left to settle their own affairs among themselves.

SELECTION OF GOODS FOR FIDA OR ONIDAH, CALLED BY THE FRENCH JUIDA, NOW KNOWN AS DAHOMEY, WITH MAIN SEAPORT WHYDAH.

The French opened trade in this district in 1669, when the Dutch were already there.

"The main export of this coast was 'slaves, cotton cloth, and blue stones, called agoy or accory, very valuable on the Gold Coast.'

"The best commodity the Europeans can carry thither to purchase is Boejies or cawries, so much valued by the natives, being the current coin there and at Popo, Fida, Benin and other countries further east, without which it is scarcely possible to traffic there. Near to Boejies the flat iron bars for the round or square will not do, and again next to iron, fine long coral, *China* sarcenets, gilt leather, white damask and red, red cloth with large lists, copper bowls or cups, brass rings, *Venice* beads or bugles of several colours, agalis, gilded looking glasses, *Leyden* serges, platilles, linen morees, salampores, red chints, broad and narrow tapsiels, blue canequins, broad gunez and narrow (a sort of linen), double canequins, French brandy in ankers or half-ankers (the anker being a 16 gallon rundlet, canary and malmsey, black caudebec hats, Italian taffeties, white or red cloth of gold or silver, *Dutch* knives, *Bosmans*, striped armoizins, with white or flowered, gold and silver brocadel, firelocks, muskets, gunpowder, large beads from *Rouen*, white flowered sarcenets, *Indian* armorzins and damask napkins,

large coral earrings, cutlaces gilded and broad, silk scarfs large umbrellors, pieces of eight, long pyramidal bells."

All the above-mentioned goods are also proper for the trade in *Benin*, *Rio Lagos* and all along the coast to *Rio Gabon*.

BENIN TRADE GOODS.

"Exports, 1678: cotton cloths like those of *Rio Lagos*, women slaves, for men slaves (though they be all foreigners, for none of the natives can be sold as such) are not allowed to be exported, but must stay there; jasper stones, a few tigers' or leopards' skins, acory or blue coral, elephants' teeth, some pieminto, or pepper. The blue coral grows in branching bushes like the red coral at the bottom of the rivers and lakes in Benin, which the natives have a peculiar art to grind or work into beads like olives, and is a very profitable merchandise at the Gold Coast, as has been observed.

"The Benin cloths are of 4 bands striped blue and white, an ell and a half long, only proper for the trade at *Sabou river* and at *Angola*, and called by the blacks *monponoqua* and the blue narrow cloths *ambasis*; the latter are much inferior to the former every way, and both sorts made in the inland country.

"The European goods are these: cloths of gold and silver, scarlet and red cloth, all sorts of calicoes and fine linen, *Haerlem* stuffs with large flowers and well starched, iron bars, strong spirits, rum and brandy, beads or bugles of several colours, red velvet, and a good quantity of Boejies, cawries as much as for the Ardra (Fida) trade being the money of the natives, as well as them; false pearls, Dutch

cans with red streaks at one end, bright brass large rings from 5 to 5½ ounces weight each, earrings of red glass or crystal, gilt looking glasses, crystal, &c."

OUWERE (NOW CALLED WARRI) TRADE, AND THE NEW CALABAR TRADE, 1678.

"Exports mainly slaves and fine cloths from New Calabar district and Ouwere. 'The principal thing that passes in Calabar as current money among the natives is brass rings for the arms or legs, which they call *bochie*, and they are so nice in the choice of them, that they will often turn over a whole cask before they find 2 to please their fancy.'

"The *English* and *Dutch* import there a great deal of copper in small bars, round and equal, about 3 feet long, weighing about 1¼ lbs., which the blacks of Calabary work with much art, splitting the bar into 3 parts from one end to the other, which they polish as fine as gold, and twist the 3 pieces together very ingeniously into cords to make what form of arm rings they please."

OLD CALABAR TRADE, 1678.

"The most current goods of Europe for the trade of Old Calabar to purchase slaves and elephants' teeth are iron bars, in quality and chiefly, copper bars, blue rags, cloth and striped *Guinea* clouts of many colours, horse bells, hawks' bells, rangoes, pewter basons of 1, 2, 3 and 4 lbs. weight, tankards of ditto of 1, 2, and 3 lbs. weight, beads very small and glazed yellow, green, purple and blue, purple copper armlets or arm rings of *Angola* make, but this last sort of goods is peculiar to the *Portuguese*."

The blacks there reckon by copper bars, reducing all sorts of goods to such bars; for example, 1 bar of iron, 4 copper bars; a man slave for 38 and a woman slave for 37 or 36 copper bars.

TRADE OF RIO DEL REY, AMBOZES COUNTRY, CAMARONES RIVER, AND DOWN TO RIO GABON.

"The *Dutch* have the greatest share in the trade here in yachts sent from Mina on the Gold Coast, whose cargo consists mostly of small copper bars of the same sort as mentioned at Old Calabar, iron bars, coral, brass basons, of the refuse goods of the Gold Coast, bloom coloured beads or bugles and purple copper armlets or rings made at *Loanda* in *Angola*, and presses for lemons and oranges. In exchange for which they yearly export from thence 400 or 500 slaves, and about 10 or 12 tons weight of fine large teeth, 2 or 3 of which commonly weigh above a hundredweight, besides accory, javelins and some sorts of knives which the blacks there make to perfection, and are proper for the trade of the Gold Coast."

"*Amboses* country, situated between the *Rio del Rey* and *Rio Camarones*, is very remarkable for the immense height of the mountains it has near the sea-shore, which the Spaniards call *Alta Tierra de Amboxi*, and reckon some of them as high as the *Pike of Teneriffe* (this refers to the great Camaroon, 13,760 feet). Trade in teeth, accory and slaves, for iron and copper bars, brass pots and kettles, hammered bugles or beads, bloom colour purple, orange and lemon colour, ox horns, steel files, &c."

The trade in the Rio Gabon at this time was inferior to

that at Cape Lopez. Indeed, the ascendency the Gaboon trade attained to in the middle parts of this 19th century was an artificial one, the natural outlet for the trade being the districts round the mouth of the Ogowé river, which penetrates through a far greater extent of country than the rivers Rembwe and Ncomo, which form the Gaboon estuary or *Rio Gabon* of Barbot.

"Great numbers of ships ran to *Cape Lopez Gonsalves* in the seventeenth century, and did a pretty brisk trade in cam wood, beeswax, honey and elephants' teeth, of which last a ship may sometimes purchase three or four thousandweight of good large ones and sometimes more, and there is always an abundance of wax; all which the Europeans purchase for knives called *Bosmans*, iron bars, beads, old sheets, brandy, malt, spirits or rum, axes, the shells called cauris, annabas, copper bars, brass basons, from eighteenpence to two shillings apiece, firelocks, muskets, powder, ball, small shot, &c."

SELECTION OF GOODS FOR THE ISLANDS FERNANDO PO, ST. THOMAS'S, PRINCE'S, AND ANNOBON.

There were about 150 ships per annum calling and trading at San Tomé in the seventeenth century. The goods in "*French* ships particularly consist in *Holland* cloth or linen as well as of *Rouen* and *Brittany*, thread of all colours, serges, silk stockings, fustians, *Dutch* knives, iron, salt, olive oil, copper in sheets or plates, brass kettles, pitch, tar, cordage, sugar forms (from 20 to 30 lbs. apiece), brandy, all kinds of strong liquors and spirits, *Canary* wines, olives, carpets, fine flour, butter, cheese, thin shoes,

Painted calicoes. 5 yards to the piece.

Blue paper Siens. 1 piece for a piece. *Scarlet.* 1 inch to 18 inches or ¾ a yard is accounted a piece.

Muskets. 1 for a piece.

Powder. the barrel or smaller of 2 lbs. goes for a piece.

Brass basons. 10 for a piece. We carry thither the largest.

Pewter basons of 4, 3, 2 and 1 lb. The No. 4 goes 4 to the piece, and those of 1 lb. 8 to a piece.

Blue perpetuanas have become but of late in great demand, they are measured as blue baftas, 5 yards making the piece.

Dutch cutlaces are the most valued because they have 2 edges, 2 such go for a piece.

Coral, the biggest and largest is much more acceptable here than small coral, which the Blacks value so little that they will hardly look on it, usually 1½ oz. is computed a piece.

Memorandum. A whole piece of blue bafts contains commonly 18½ yards, however some are shorter and others exceed.

Pentadoes. Commonly contain 9 or 9¼ to the piece.

Tapseils. The piece usually holds 15 yards.

Nicanees. The piece is 9 or 9½ yards long."

The main export of Congo was slaves and elephants' teeth and grass clothes called Tibonges, were used by the Portuguese as at Loando in Angola. Some of them single marked with the arms of Portugal, and others double marked, and some unmarked.

The single marked cloth was equal in value to 4 unmarked, equal to about 8 pence.

nature much fitter to bear with the malignity of the air." (For a full account of this matter see the *History of Portugal* by Faria y Sousa, p. 304.)

San Tomé is now very flourishing, on account of its soil being suited to cocoa and coffee, and there are to-day there plenty of full-blooded Portuguese; but the old strain of Jewish mulattos still exists and is represented by individuals throughout all the coast regions of West Africa. Moreover, these mulattos secured in the seventeenth century a monopoly for Portugal of the slave trade in the Lower Congo, and I largely ascribe the prevalence of customs identical with those mentioned in the Old Testament that you find among the Fjort tribes to their influence, although you always find such customs represented in all the native cultures in West Africa (presumably because the West African culture is what the Germans would call the *urstuff*), but I fancy in no culture are they so developed as among the Fjorts.[1]

TRADE GOODS FOR CONGO AND CABENDA, 1700.

"Blue bafts, a piece containing 6 yards and of a deep almost black colour, and is measured either with a stick of 27 inches, of which 8 sticks make a piece, or by a lesser stick, 18 inches long, 12 of which are accounted a piece, *Guinea* stuffs, 2 pieces to make a piece, tapseils have the same measure as blue bafts.

Nicanees, the same measure.

Black bays, 2½ yards for a piece, measured by 5 sticks of 18 inches each.

Annabasses, 10 to the piece.

[1] For the reasons for the unhealthiness of this island see *Travels in West Africa* (Macmillan), p. 46.

Painted callicoes, 6 yards to the piece.

Blue paper Slesia, 1 piece for a piece. Scarlet, 1 stick of 18 inches or ½ a yard is accounted a piece.

Muskets, 1 for a piece.

Powder, the barrel or rundlet of 7 lbs. goes for a piece.

Brass basons, 10 for a piece. We carry thither the largest.

Pewter basons of 4, 3, 2 and 1 lb. The No. 4 goes 4 to the piece, and those of 1 lb. 8 to a piece.

Blue perpetuanas have become but of late in great demand, they are measured as blue bafts, 6 yards making the piece.

Dutch cutlaces are the most valued because they have 2 edges, 2 such go for a piece.

Coral, the biggest and largest is much more acceptable here than small coral, which the Blacks value so little that they will hardly look on it, usually 1½ oz. is computed a piece.

Memorandum. A whole piece of blue bafts contains commonly 18½ yards, however some are shorter and others exceed.

Pentadoes. Commonly contain 9 or 9½ to the piece.

Tapseils. The piece usually holds 15 yards.

Nicanees. The piece is 9 or 9½ yards long."

The main export of Congo was slaves and elephants' teeth and grass clothes called Tibonges, were used by the Portuguese as at Loando in Angola. Some of them single marked with the arms of Portugal, and others double marked, and some unmarked.

The single marked cloth was equal in value to 4 unmarked, equal to about 8 pence.

TRADE GOODS FOR SAN PAUL DO LOANDA.

"Cloths with red lists, great ticking with long stripes and fine wrought red kerseys, *Silesia* and other fine linen, fine velvet, small and great gold and silver laces, broad black bays, *Turkish* tapestry or carpets, white and all sorts of coloured yarns, blue and black beads, stitching and sewing silk, *Canary* wines, brandy, linseed oil, seamen's knives, all sorts of spices, white sugar and many other commodities and trifles as great fish-hooks, pins a finger long, ordinary pins, needles and great and small hawks' bells.

"The *English* compose their cargoes generally of brass, basons, annabasses, blue bafts, paper, brawls, *Guinea* stuffs, muskets, powder, nicanees, tapseils, scarlet, *Slesia's*, coral, bags, wrought pewter, beads, pentedoes, knives, spirits, &c., all sorts of haberdashery, silks, linens, shirts, hats, shoes, &c., wrought pewter plates, dishes, porringers, spoons of each a little assortment are also very probably vended among the *Portuguese*, and also all manner of native made cloths from other parts of *Guinea* fetch good prices in *Angola*."

TROPICAL WEST AFRICA
S O U T H
A T L A N T I C
O C E A N
St. Helena I. Br.
Tropic of Capricorn
10°
20°
St. PAUL DE LOANDA
Coanza R.
Dondo
Malanje
Old Benguela
Novo Redondo
Quicombo
Egito
Katombela
BENGUELA
C. St. Mary
Bihe
Cobongo
Kinge
Caconda
Cangamba
Killenges
Humpata
Huilla
Little Fish B.
C. Negro
Mossamedes
Pinda
MOSSAMEDES
Great Fish B.
Kuteve
Humbe
Nourse or Cunene
Hiambe
C. Frio
Hoanib R.
Hope Bight
Damara Land
C. Cross
Walfish Bay
Br.
Scheppmansdorp
Katiba

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